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Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

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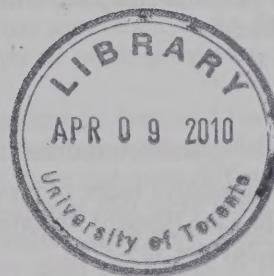
Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 31 March 2010**

**Mercredi 31 mars 2010**



Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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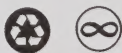
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 31 March 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 31 mars 2010

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the aboriginal prayer.

*Prayers.*

### VISITOR

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, which you may rule out of order: This morning we will have joining us in the members' gallery President Barb Taylor, who's the president of Canadore College and is retiring in eight days after 32 years of service to our college communities, 18 at George Brown and 12 and a half at Canadore College in North Bay. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank her for her great service to the province and to northern Ontario. That's my point of order.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

#### SUPPLY ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2010

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 30, 2010, on the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance; resuming the debate adjourned on March 30, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 17, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 / *Projet de loi 17, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2010.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very satisfied that I have the opportunity to speak this morning. I was worried that perhaps there would be others trying to get to the microphone before me. However, I gather we're speaking on the supply motion, which gives me rather free rein on a cross-section of issues.

First of all, I think after the budget we have to realize, too, that the government hasn't said much that is exciting or revealing. In fact, they have a large, large deficit and there's not much in here about jobs, technically. I think the important part of the supply motion is that we all agree on that kind of motion. We have to pay our bills.

We have responsibilities to the staff, both in the Legislature and other partners, who make the province of Ontario the great place it is. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has made it very clear that we would be supportive of the theory of completing our obligations to the public civil servants who make this place function, as well as, you might say, make the province function. If there's any credit to be taken in the statement around the economy, or by the Premier, for its successes, it should also take credit for its failures.

I think that substantially the point I'm making is that the direction, the policy, the plan—or lack of it—come from the government. Premier McGuinty has the privilege of representing the people of Ontario in this august chamber, and he sets the agenda, he sets the table, he sets the goals and he sets the plan and the priorities. I think you have to leave the evaluation of his success, or lack of it, to the people of Ontario.

I want to repeat this, because it's very important: If you're going to take credit for the successes of green energy, the Oak Ridges moraine, the greenbelt and the improvements in education and health care, you should also take the other side of that if there's a failure in the system.

You could, to some extent, blame the other partners—the municipal leadership. I guess right now he's telling them to cut the pay for employees—firemen, police and ambulance—and stuff like that. It's a rather peculiar dilemma. He could blame Stephen Harper for much of it, which I think he has some room to do. But if you look at Ontario in relation to other provinces, we're in worse shape.

I'd like to be optimistic here, and I want Ontario to be better. But I think there are rules, regulations and red tape that are making it more and more difficult. Yesterday, we had two or three groups that were here; one, the professors of our universities, were here. Their association was asking for smaller class sizes. Yet in the last two days Minister Milloy has made two statements, one on student support and the other, basically, on trying to put some more money into the system. The Premier takes full credit for putting \$300-million-plus into post-secondary under Second Career and the college and university system. I talked to both Don Lovisa and Ronald Bordessa just recently, actually at the tour of ACE, the Automotive Centre of Excellence, the largest wind turbine and weather simulator, etc., in North America, and they were complimentary of that thing.

What I heard from the professors yesterday was that the highest tuition in Canada is right here in Ontario. The



young pages here, who will be going to university some day, will be paying the highest tuition in Canada.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Already, the members are blaming previous governments. Well, they've been here seven years, going on eight—it seems like a century, but time seems bad when things aren't going well. Here's the point: If they say they're going to change, they haven't changed a thing.

The second thing the professors were saying was that we have the highest student debt, but also the largest class sizes in the country. You can't have it both ways. If you are the leader—it's like the Toronto Maple Leafs. They were knocked out of the playoffs yesterday by losing a game near the end. I think that's what has happened here: They've kind of lost track of the goal, the vision.

The best place in the world to live, raise your family and do business used to be here in Ontario, and I think that even for the first couple of years it went fairly well for them. In the first couple of years, it went quite well for them. In fact, at that time they blamed then-Premier Ernie Eves, who lost the election, for pretty well everything.

But here's the issue: There probably was a small deficit at the time, but now we have a huge deficit. In fact, the deficit is a huge debt, and the most troubling part of it is that we're spending about \$120 billion annually, spending has increased by about 63%, and you have to ask, is it any better in health care? We're hearing about hospital emergencies closing and the lack of long-term care for our aging population. We're hearing about large class sizes.

0910

Here's the real issue: The deficit right now is \$21-billion-plus. That represents about 20% of all spending, and the debt is future taxes. The young pages here and the other young people—I think it's unconscionable to leave the debt to your children and grandchildren. That isn't meant in a malicious way; it's a statement of fact. We can blame Stephen Harper. We could blame David Miller. David Miller—one of his great left-wing allies has been screaming about one of the tragic cuts in public transit. The former Minister of Transportation is here. He probably wanted that to go ahead.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, the Premier, who's in charge, who has the keys to the vault, who gives out the money and the perks and the other loose change to various individuals and groups and organizations, cut \$4 billion from that transit, so now we've got gridlock. We know that's a drag on the economy. I don't see any consistent plan. I think the time is coming when people will see through all the rhetoric.

All of us here want a better future. All of us—that would include the NDP and the Conservatives as well as the Liberal Party—want Ontario to be the best place to live, to work and to raise your children. We want the best environment. We want the best schools. We want the best day care. Let's check out the priorities. How are we

doing? The biggest item that we all know is health care. It's the largest in my area, the riding of Durham, which includes Uxbridge, Scugog and Clarington. We're hearing from the LHINs. In fact, we know they don't have enough money. We're blaming the LHINs, but the money comes from that person over there, the leader. All the hospitals are going to be in complete withdrawal because their budgets are basically payroll, and their allowance—I think it's 1.2% of the overall allocation to health care—is to the hospital side. That means that, like in Northumberland hospital in Lou Rinaldi's riding, I think they're cutting 23 beds, which means that elderly people will be pushed into the community. And there's no community support. We know the CCACs have been told and directed to cut the spending by 20%.

Here's the real issue when you get down to it—we're only dealing with the issues, the priorities. How are they doing? What is the report card? Health care? I'd say a problem. I don't want to wish anyone's untimely death, but I see problems. Yanking \$1 billion out of the pharmaceutical portion of the health care budget, which is about 46 cents of every dollar—if they can't manage the biggest one, what's happening to the smallest ones?

Then I look at the other end. Children's aid societies across this province are starving. There was a good article in York about how overall, across the province—and these are organizations sanctioned legislatively to take care of vulnerable children, often children who are wards of the court and other circumstances that the children had no part or no say in. These are vulnerable children. I am working with the Durham Children's Aid Society, and I think they do a marvellous job. I want to thank the director and the board. The board is volunteers. They really give up their heart and soul for our children.

At the other end, they threw out a pot full of money around by-election time after the children's aid societies provincially were screaming in the north. They were actually prepared to close. When you cut those organizations, you cut services directly to children, services that are mandated by the minister. I know now that they have a structural deficit. This is the last day of the fiscal year; it's March 31. It's the end of the 2009 fiscal year. I think they're short around \$3 million to \$4 million. That means services for children. We've got the health care dilemma. The smoke is there but we can't see the fire yet. It's huge challenges, big-time challenges. At the other end we have children's aid.

We also know that the school boards are in a bit of a bind. They've been given this full-day kindergarten to implement. I'm hearing now that it's being implemented in a completely ham-fisted manner. I think they've set up Leona Dombrowsky, the Minister of Education, now, and are protecting Kathleen Wynne, who has been moved on to transportation. She's a popular person and has a passion for education—no doubt of that. I would say I do, myself, as I was a trustee for a couple of terms. As well, I would say that with five children and my wife and one of my daughters as educators—don't ever think that anyone doesn't realize the importance of education, primary,



elementary, secondary and post-secondary. It is the key to the future. It's a knowledge-based economy; we get that.

What are they doing with full-day kindergarten? They're making class sizes larger in the elementary grades, period. They will all be over 20. We know that in grade 8 now, it's almost 30. They're really supposed to be preparing for post-secondary and more complex study and a more rigorous curriculum, and they're saying there are more graduates coming? They hope that the \$300 million they're pumping into the post-secondary portion is going to cover it, but I'm looking at the priorities here. We've got the two biggest items, health care and education. I'd say education—it's sort of like the old saying, "Peace at any price." We have declining enrolment, increased spending; forcing down their throat this full-day kindergarten. There are partners in the early learning centres, and others, who have been doing fantastic work. We all understand the importance of early intervention with children, especially children at risk, and I think we would all find that there have to be more choices for parents there—supported choices, choices that are regulated by quality. We don't need lower standards; we don't just need babysitting; we need caring and compassionate instructional care.

I'm looking at the top three or four items, and I see clouds on the horizon. Let's leave it at that. No one wants to be a downer first thing in the morning on this thing, but on this supply motion, we've got to pay the bills. We're in support of that.

If I look at Bill 17, where the detail of this whole thing is, where you see the schedules, I see energy prices going through the roof. No question. They're going up—not down, up. Yet OPG, Ontario Power Generation, has applied to the energy board for a 9.6% increase. Not only that; there's this new environmental charge. You're going to be charged for your smart meter, and then they're going to add 8% HST. If you're paying \$200 a month now, open up your eyes; it's going to be \$400 before long under Premier McGuinty's plan.

What about energy? Let's look at energy. Energy is an essential consumption. It's not like cable TV—you can cut off the movie channel. Energy is an essential commodity, an essential consumption. You have to heat your home or cool it, you have to cook your food, you have to keep yourself and your clothing clean. There's very little discretionary consumption of energy. Yes, we should shut our computers off. Yes, we should shut off the high-fidelity equipment and we shouldn't have unnecessary lights on. I believe very strongly, as a parent of five children, in shutting off the lights and the electricity, but there's very little consumption used.

What is the ministry doing there? The utilities that distribute the electrons to your home are screaming that they get paid on how much electricity they sell. Now we're conserving—which is good; I support that conservation—but they're saying their revenue is declining because they aren't selling as much electricity, so now

they have to up the rates. You're going to pay more and use less.

People on fixed incomes are getting squeezed right out of the equation. This is the most discouraging circumstance to have to talk about here, in a province that used to be number one and now is the recipient of \$1 billion in transfer payments from the federal government.

We are the largest province. We're a little in excess of 30% of the country's population. We used to be 50% of the economy; now we're about 38%. Danny Williams is beating us, and Newfoundland and Labrador has fewer people than the region of Durham. Prince Edward Island has fewer people than my riding.

0920

**Ms. M. Aileen Carroll:** But it's a nice place.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Oh, it's a beautiful place, absolutely. In fact, Canada is a wonderful country, and that's not the debate. My debate is, how are we doing? I think we should be generous, sharing and caring. I completely support that. But when you have other provinces supporting you in the transfer payments—that's how it works—I think it's unconscionable.

I've looked at three priorities. I've looked at the big ones, education and health care. How are we doing? Let's get the report card out. I've looked at the other end. I've looked at the energy file as well as the children's aid societies and I'll even look at social assistance, welfare. They cut the special meal allowance for people who are on support payments who may have diabetes or other kinds of ailments. You know why? Because those vulnerable people have no voice. They've attacked—and I think it's tragic that people, seniors, are going to be paying more in HST on July 1. Imagine it: If they're spending \$100 a month, each month, on, say, TV cable service, Internet and maybe heating for their home, basically essential consumption—we're not talking the theatre or the opera here—if that's \$100 a month it's now going to be \$108 a month. That's another \$100 right there without them changing one thing they're doing. It is a tax increase.

As I said, in Bill 17—I was looking through there—it's not just the energy. On property registrations, the land registry office, the surveyors: When they do land surveying and block this all out and register it, you're going to pay a fee for it. Now they've got a private company. I look around and I watch the scandal at the Ontario lottery and gaming commission. I watch the scandal at eHealth—\$1 billion. I've listened to the auditor and the Ombudsman, whom they're trying to fire because he's looking into some of the wasteful spending in some areas.

With all due respect, I think the Premier has lost his way under the heavy slugging in this tough economy. We saw it in the budget. He didn't have the courage even—I'll give you one example. There was a small expenditure, in terms of government spending, of \$25 million. What it was is, the employees who currently collect the provincial sales tax and gas tax are being transferred to another department where they're going to collect the



HST, which is the harmonized federal and provincial tax. They're going to be going in the same car with the same business card to the same office, and get to go to the same businesses to audit their books, to give them advice on how to remit their tax or make up deficits that they might have. And we're giving them severance pay of \$45,000 each when they did not lose their jobs. I want this very clear: Having worked in personnel, there are responsibilities by employers, and if there is a severance, they should be entitled to severance. Usually it's one month pay for each year of service, up to a maximum, I think. There's one example of an expenditure.

Another example were these untendered contracts to, some say, those friendly to the Liberal Party, connected, often even worked for McGuinty—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** But we're talking about a specific case here. Offsetting it with another wrongdoing is not productive, I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It's not productive to show another error to address a current error that I'm discussing. Staff that are related—there are provisions under the conflict of interest standards where they're not supposed to gainfully employed in these kinds of things.

We had a person who is well respected, a long-serving expert in health care who was sort of let go and then hired back in a contract for \$350,000. These are expenditures in a time when we should be very seriously guarding the dollars that the hard-working people of Ontario pay.

I want to conclude by saying that the opposition, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, is supportive of the supply motion, which is the motion to pay the civil servants who have contributed so much to this province. That's our obligation, and Conservatives believe in following your principles and obligations.

I am concerned, and remain concerned—and I want this left on the record—that the government has lost its way. We have a deficit, and the economy of Ontario is not growing as robustly as in other provinces. There is a lot of work to be done. I want to see a vision with some action attached to it. It saddens me, after my roughly 15 years here, to see the province go from a leader to a laggard. It's quite disturbing.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to take about half the time that is available to the NDP to talk about a number of issues that concern us in the budget that was recently presented.

Certainly for us, the deferral of spending on transit—on Transit City in Toronto—is symptomatic of the fundamental mistakes that have been made in this budget. If you look at the reality in the GTA, congestion costs us \$5 billion to \$6 billion a year in negative economic impact—far beyond the cost of putting in this new transit. The new transit alone won't solve all that congestion, but if we don't make ongoing investments to reduce congestion and allow traffic and people to flow freely, then

we undermine the economic base of the GTA, which is a big chunk of Ontario's economy itself.

The Toronto Star, which is generally very supportive of this government and its budget, has been pointing out that this deferral of funds is a mistake and will have negative impacts on the GTA and Ontario's economy. They also point out in an article today that the withdrawal of funds for bus replacement will mean a reduction in service. If this government persists with its attack on transit in this budget, then the kinds of numbers we've seen showing the GTA as number one in terms of long commute times—that negative result will be strengthened.

I had an opportunity the other day to ask the minister about the lack of transit investment, and what I got back was a recitation of all the investments that had been made and all the good works claimed by this government. It was interesting that even the Toronto Star today said in its editorial that clearly that answer is an embarrassment; the reality is that the investment is inadequate to the needs of the GTA, inadequate to the needs of this very large urban area—and frankly, probably to the other large urban areas in Ontario—and that that lack of investment will undermine us economically. It will also drive up health care costs, Mr. Speaker, because as you well know, the more cars and congestion on the road, the more air pollution we have to deal with. That's more people in hospital with asthma and more people clogging emergency rooms because air pollution is making them sick.

So this decision to push back investment in Transit City and in new buses means higher costs for our economy, undermining our competitiveness and higher costs for health care—my colleague from Nickel Belt will talk about health care in greater detail when we get to that item.

We have to have a change of heart on this item. This government needs to rethink its failure to invest properly in transit. Just before Christmas, we had the report from the climate secretariat, from the minister, about the simple reality that this government was not going to meet its climate change targets in Ontario; it was not going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the amount it committed to. That's of significant consequence. Whenever I ask the Minister of the Environment what he's going to do to make up that difference, what he's going to do to actually close the gap to meet the targets, as inadequate as they are, I get nothing, again, but a reciting of the virtues and wonders of this government.

**0930**

In fact, in this budget, the deferral of investment in transit is a rolling back of action on climate change. Transportation is responsible for 32% of greenhouse gas emissions in this province. Two thirds of that is personal transportation. If in fact you can't even invest in transit, how are you going to meet the targets that were set out? How are you even going to start making up the shortfall? I don't think you are. I don't think this government sees action on climate change as a priority. It sees it as something that it has to deal with in public relations, in a



spin sort of way, but in terms of concrete action, an investment in this province signals in this budget that that isn't where we're going.

I want to talk as well about the full-day learning plan, because I think that what Dr. Charles Pascal brought forward made a lot of sense and was of consequence to this province, of consequence to families and of consequence to children. What he brought forward was an integrated plan for expanding child care in this province, but what we got was not what he set out. If you'll remember, in his plan he said that you have to take the integrated program as a whole to actually ensure that things make sense. What we're seeing now, and what I'm getting in emails from constituents and from people outside of my riding, is the plain fact that for daycare centres that have been economically viable because they've had older children, their economics have changed radically. It's a good thing that there's full-day learning. The flaw, the fault, is that there is not the funding there to help the other parts of the daycare system survive and in fact expand, to fulfill the promise that was set out in Dr. Pascal's report. That's a huge problem. That is a very huge problem for parents, for families, for children and for the long-term good of this society. That is something that has to be corrected when this budget is debated, when this budget is voted on.

The failure to provide high-quality, universally affordable daycare and the failure to put in place a transition plan undermines the earning potential of Ontario families, frankly, because it reduces—I say “reduces” because there's the potential for loss of a lot of daycare spaces—the investment we make in our children. That is not good for the long-term health and viability of this society.

In the short time remaining to me, I want to say that the elimination of the special diet allowance is also part of that short-sighted approach to the well-being of people in this province. People who are on welfare, who have a medical condition, who are going to lose their medical allowance or have it cut back dramatically are going to find it very difficult to live. These people will wind up in hospitals, they'll wind up in doctor's offices, and they will be trying to deal with medical conditions that flow from a lack of an adequate diet. Not only is it morally wrong to do that, but in practical dollars and cents it's wrong to do that. In fact, you can have a very expensive medical intervention or you can have a far less expensive and humane allocation of funds so that people can eat properly. That's a substantial problem in this budget, a substantial problem in this approach, and it reflects that short-sightedness. We are failing to make the investments that will cut our costs in the long run and provide us with a better quality of life in the long run, and imposing substantial burdens on individuals and on society right now. This budget is profoundly flawed.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to take the time to have a little discussion here on this particular

motion. What we're looking at is a supply bill, which obviously is something that means the business of government, in terms of payments to be made—is the issue of this particular motion. But it means that it's an opportunity to look at the way in which the government is spending its money. I'm going to take the time here to look at three different areas that I think merit particular emphasis.

The first one is simply understanding that one of the fundamental responsibilities of government is the management of taxpayers' money. That's where all the money comes from, and obviously the trust that people put in their elected representatives is to demonstrate that they have that trust in the management of their own money. But there have been a couple of examples that I think demonstrate why people are cynical and certainly suspicious about the way in which their own money is used.

We've seen in the last few months the question of untendered contracts, the fact that people have been awarded business opportunities, and in fact quite lucrative ones, particularly in the eHealth scandal, and now we're looking at ones with the local health integration networks, which are commonly referred to as the LHINs. Here again, we see untendered contracts. Now, in question period the government has referred to the fact that they changed the rules, that this is not the opportunity it once was.

Aside from that, I think it's important to understand that the government is in the business, and has been in the business forever, on the issue of procurement; that is, making opportunity available to the private sector to undertake some responsibility, whether it's building something or maintaining something, providing advice as consultants—there's an entire range of activities that fall under that. So it seems to me, given the fact that this process is a historic, well-honoured process, that the notion that the reason the government fell into this trap of untendered contracts has something to do with the rules and the need to change them is very unfortunate, because obviously there were always rules on tendering, and this seems to diminish the importance this government has on the importance of those rules.

Another area that people expect, of course, is the delivery of services. What we are witnessing in the immediate past is that too often the government is cutting corners. They are looking at the delivery of certain services, and I would suggest that this ends up being a false economy. In my riding, it's well known amongst the people who are receiving services from the CCAC that there has been a decrease in those services. What happens as a result? People are forced to use a more expensive process from the taxpayer point of view, and that is, of course, through the door of the hospital, with the inefficiencies, then, that that creates within the hospital.

Another example is the plight of the children's aid societies representing two areas: Simcoe and York. I was involved in the discussions that the respective children's aid services were finding in meeting what is their legally



mandated responsibility; that is, to look after the most frail and vulnerable children in the community. They found themselves in the position of having to lay off workers, and then at literally the 11th hour, the ministry came in with some funding to take them to today, March 31, the end of the fiscal year. That kind of instability creates more problems. It would seem, again, to demonstrate that by cutting these corners, by leaving these organizations desperate for money and having to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities—that meant they had to lay off people and give notices back in December. That's not good management. That's not the way to protect the most vulnerable in our community.

0940

Finally, I would like to just give a couple of figures on another area: the deficit, which is the gap between what monies are anticipated and what monies are going to be spent. That deficit is at the point of \$21 billion, the largest in Ontario's history and a greater amount than the entire deficit of every other province put together. We also have a debt; a debt that has gone, since this government took office, from \$148 billion to \$289 billion. This is the legacy of this government to the children and grandchildren of the province. It has meant that we have dropped into have-not status, which again is for the first and only time in Ontario's history.

All of this, then, naturally creates a concern about what the future holds. Well, our leader, Tim Hudak, has come up with 10for2010.ca as a vehicle to outline practical, affordable and convenient opportunities that we believe this government should be taking. We believe that they should be doing things that create jobs and stimulate the economy and encourage consumer and investor confidence. When we look at the kind of spending that this government has taken—the corners cut, the false economies—these are all things that take away from consumer and private sector confidence.

I want to just finish on the fact that there are alternatives. There are things that we could be doing that this government is not doing.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to rise in the House this morning and talk a little bit about this bill. The first thing I would like to talk about is the 1.5% increase that was included in the budget for hospitals.

I had the pleasure to tour rural and northern Ontario with the Ontario Health Quality Council. I was on a panel, and I will name my colleagues because it will become pertinent pretty soon. The first one is Dr. Claudette Chase. Dr. Chase is a physician serving remote First Nations communities. Another panellist was the Honourable Roger Gallaway. Roger was a Liberal member of Parliament for Sarnia—Lambton from 1993-2004. I also had Dr. Tim Macdonald. Dr. Macdonald is a surgeon. He was with the Armed Forces in Canada but was also the former chief of staff of Englehart hospital. I was also on the panel with Mrs. Barb Proctor. Barb is a retired registered nurse, and she is from Prince Edward county. We also

had Kay Tod. Kay is also a nurse. She was an executive member of the RAO, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, as well as a past president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, local 32.

Together we went to 12 different rural and northern communities. Those included Wallaceburg, Shelburne, Kincardine, Welland, Cobourg, Port Perry, Haliburton, Burk's Falls, Winchester, Picton, St. Joseph Island and New Liskeard. What we saw and what we heard from the hundreds of people who came to those hearings was that they feel that the shortfalls in funding to hospitals are being compensated on the back of small rural and northern hospitals.

In each and every one of those communities, people came and told us about service cuts. The first one, which was almost in all of their comments, is that they would divest themselves of the physiotherapy department, of their outpatient physios, and they would divest themselves of their diabetes education. In some of them, if you look at Fort Erie or Port Colborne, it was the emergency departments that were closed, to the point where those people would come and explain to us the effect that this is having on the community.

Once the hospital does not have a critical mass of services anymore, they start to lose staff—all of them. I remember in Picton, a delegation of dietitians came to tell us that they were all being laid off. Their layoff notices, actually, will be executed today—six nutritionists, highly trained people, helping people manage diabetes. We know that type 2 diabetes is going to reach epidemic proportions in Ontario. We're expecting a million more Ontarians to have type 2 diabetes, yet we're laying off trained nutritionists who have specialty training in helping people deal with diabetes and prevent it. That we heard all over the place.

Once those professionals are gone—in some of the areas, like Burk's Falls, they lost their professionals long ago—it makes it really hard for them to recruit and keep the other services viable. It then makes it hard for them to recruit physicians, and people start to have difficulty with access to primary care, because there is nothing in their community that they can offer a physician but solo practice. Very few physicians want to go to a community where they are the only show in town. That means if your patient presents with musculoskeletal problems, you don't have a physiotherapist to refer to; you have to handle them yourself. When a person comes to you with grief, there's no bereavement, there are no social workers to refer to. When a patient comes to you with diabetes, there is no dietitian; you are on your own. This is not conducive to providing good-quality care. We all know that for primary care to be good-quality care, primary care has to be offered by a team. So as we gut services out of remote, rural northern Ontario, it becomes impossible for those communities to have access to good-quality primary care, and it goes downhill from there.

We heard this in every community we went to—people, having just had hip surgery, being discharged and being unable to access physiotherapy. I remember one



person who had a total knee replacement who could not extend her knee fully. She needs physio or she will lose range of motion for the rest of her life. And although the most expensive part of the care, the surgery, was there for her, she could not access physio to make that surgery a success—success being regaining full use of her leg without pain. So the health care system was ready to pay for the expensive care but was not ready to pay for the physiotherapy that would make her mobile.

I remember a very nice-looking younger woman who was in a motor vehicle accident and who came to present—the same thing happened to her. She lived in a rural area. The physiotherapy had been closed. There was private, for-profit physio close by, but she did not have the money to pay, which means that services were not available to her. This is happening throughout rural and northern Ontario, and we don't see anything in the budget to change this.

Other things we don't see in the budget: There is no investment in health promotion and disease prevention in keeping people well—what we in the NDP call the second stage of medicare. If we want to curb the escalating costs of our health care system that is there to treat people when they are sick, you have to invest upstream. You have to keep people well. There is nothing being said or done in Ontario to try to keep people well. All we do is say that we cannot afford the escalating costs of our health care system.

Je voulais également parler du programme de la maternelle et du jardin à temps plein. La maternelle et le jardin à temps plein est une bonne idée. Il n'y a personne qui va vous dire que ce n'est pas une bonne idée. Un investissement dans la petite enfance est quelque chose de bien.

Du côté francophone, dans les écoles séparées comme dans les écoles publiques, on offre la maternelle et le jardin à temps plein depuis longtemps. Malheureusement, le projet de loi qui a été présenté n'a pas été présenté d'une façon qui est respectueuse de ce qui se passe dans la communauté francophone déjà. Ce projet de loi-là n'a pas été fait pour les francophones et n'a pas écouté les francophones non plus.

Les communautés francophones sont encore fragiles et ont besoin de protection, mais le projet de loi, comme il est en ce moment, est tellement rigide que les structures qui ont été développées et mises en place par les écoles francophones ne seront pas capables de continuer.

Certaines écoles sont capables de s'adapter, mais pour bien d'autres, ça va vouloir dire une diminution de services à la population francophone dans son ensemble parce que les garderies, les services à la petite enfance, et cetera, qui s'étaient développés pour appuyer le programme en place, n'auront plus de masse critique pour pouvoir continuer.

Du côté francophone, on dit que le projet de loi, dans sa forme actuelle, aura pour impact d'augmenter l'assimilation des étudiants francophones. Pourquoi est-ce que le gouvernement n'écouterait pas les francophones quand on leur dit que leur projet de loi va assimiler les petits

Franco-Ontariens et les petites Franco-Ontariennes? Je ne peux pas croire que notre gouvernement veut faire ça. Ils doivent nous écouter. Ils doivent écouter les francophones et mettre de la flexibilité dans le projet de loi pour protéger contre l'assimilation et également pour aider avec la pénurie d'éducatrices et d'éducateurs à la petite enfance.

Dans un dernier temps—I see that I'm running out of time.

I wanted to talk about the energy credit in the bill. The energy credit of between \$130 for a single person and \$200 for a family will not cover the increase that the HST will bring to the people of the north. We're looking at an average of \$270 for the people of the north. If the government is serious that they want to help the north, don't put the HST on energy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Ms. Smith has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance, supplementaries only. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 17, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

## SUPPLY ACT, 2010

### LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2010

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 / Projet de loi 17, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2010.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** We have no further business at this time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** There being no further business at this time, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 0954 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I've got some folks here from down Niagara region, people who have been fighting the McGuinty health care cuts and hospital closures: Marelyn Athoe, Dori Emerson, Fiona McMurren, June Robinson, Joy Russell and Pat Schoefield.



**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I'm happy today that we have visitors from Burlington. Bert and Mae Radford are residents of Burlington who are billeting a Rotary exchange student from Denmark. I welcome Bert and Mae, and also Mille Stockfisch, from Vojens, Denmark.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome—they're going to be here shortly—the grade 7 and 8 class from St. Peter's school in Quinte West. They have a bunch of friends, exchange students from Yukon, and they'll be here shortly.

Also, I'd like to introduce my good friend Bob Dodds, from my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West, in the west gallery.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm not sure if my guests are here, but I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Dennise Taylor-Gilhen, Lynda McKenzie and John Parkhurst, who are all here today with the Parkinson Society Canada.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I want to introduce some of my staff—Paul, Susan, Heather and Susan's daughter Emma—to Queen's Park.

Also today, Fashion Design Council of Canada has been in the building. It's Fashion Week.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I would like to take this opportunity to wish happy birthday to our colleague from Hamilton Mountain. Since she has been here, she has been getting younger and younger.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'd like to introduce to the House today friends of Ontario in the members' gallery east, and my colleague from Peterborough will have a further statement later in the day. In the gallery are Mr. Ed Carter-Edwards, an Allied airman shot down in World War II, and my friend from Peterborough will elaborate on that later today; his wife, Lois Carter-Edwards; their son Dennis Carter-Edwards; Karen Carter-Edwards, daughter-in-law; Craig Carter-Edwards, a grandson; and Sean Carter-Edwards, their great-grandson. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** While they're not quite in the gallery yet, I'm going to acknowledge the visit to Queen's Park today by Mr. David Pranger and the grade 5 class of Holbrook public school, which is located in my riding of Hamilton Centre. I welcome them.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to introduce today several friends and family members of page Mathilda Murray. We have Mathilda's mom, Lisa; her brother Jack Murray; her uncle Kevin Schildroth; her aunt Beth Malloy; Tony Weldon; Suzanne Malloy, Mathilda's grandmother; and last and certainly not least, her grandfather Tony Malloy. Welcome to all.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the member from Vaughan and page Catia Marceau, I'd like to welcome her mother, Giulia Marceau, and family friend Rob Castellarin to the members' gallery east. Welcome.

On behalf of the member from Brampton West and page Colin Boyle, I'd like to welcome his mother, Joe-Anne Boyle; his father, Bill Boyle; his grandmother

Anne Armeni; and his sister Caitlin Boyle to the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

There being no further introductions, it is time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Premier. Everything you said about a wage freeze last week was qualified when you admitted this week that there are exemptions for years of service, performance, learning and who knows what else. Everything you said about not raising taxes was qualified when you raised the health tax, four taxes on energy bills and the HST. Everything you said about putting an end to untendered contracts was qualified by your untendered deals for Casino Niagara, the Windsor Energy Centre, and with local health integration consultants.

Premier, does everything you say come with fine print?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There's a lot in there, but on the other hand, there's nothing in there. Let me just say that as my friends scramble about in search of a positive policy that, at some point in time, hopefully, they will place before the people of Ontario, I want to remind my colleagues that we have a plan for Ontarians—it's called Open Ontario. It's about committing ourselves to a province that is enthusiastic about our future. We're not shrinking from a world that the Conservatives see that threatens us; we see a world that welcomes us.

We want to find ways to continue to invest in the quality of our health care and the quality of the education that we deliver to all our children. We're going to find ways, for example, to make Toronto an elite financial centre that attracts still more investment from around the world. We're moving forward; they're mired in the past.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** It's difficult to get to the meaning of what the Premier is trying to say when everything is in the fine print, and then the fine print is buried. The June 17 press announcement, in which he said, "From now on, the government and all its agencies will no longer allow sole-sourced contracts," does not have an asterisk.

Up until this week, Premier McGuinty said he put an end to all sole-sourced contracts, but unfortunately, the Liberals are trying to cancel the public review of the LHINs, where we could hold the Premier to account for his on-again, off-again ban.

Can Premier McGuinty explain the difference between an untendered contract and an untendered contract extension?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague the Minister of Health has, at some considerable length



now, had the opportunity to speak to those very issues, but let me tell you about the big picture here from the Conservative perspective.

If you want to shut down hospitals, you've got to get rid of the community champions, so you're going to have to get rid of the LHINs. If you want to fire nurses, you're going to have to get rid of community champions, so you're going to have to get rid of the LHINs. If you want to reduce hospital beds, you've got to get rid of community champions.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members from Renfrew and Welland.

Members will please come to order. I think most members would want to have a question period and not have the Speaker stand.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** If your real agenda is to make cuts to health care and to compromise the quality of health care services for Ontario families, then you want to get rid of the LHINs. That's why we can expect from this party, for a protracted period of time now, an ongoing assault on community members who decide to participate in their LHINs in their communities to stand up for their community health care. That's what this is really all about.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Any suggestion that the Progressive Conservatives want to make deep cuts in health care is complete nonsense, but back to the question.

Up until this week, Premier McGuinty said he put an end to all untendered contracts, but now the McGuinty Liberals are defending the untendered contracts they handed out to communications and administrative consultants.

The Waterloo Wellington LHIN didn't put contracts out for competitive bids if the consultant was "highly regarded," the LHIN was "short-staffed," or it was a contract extension. How do we know? They told us.

Did Premier McGuinty scrap the public review of the LHINs to keep us from finding out these flimsy excuses, or did he have something else to hide?

1040

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to refresh my honourable colleague's memory about the construct that was in place that we have changed, governments used to have regional health offices in the communities. Those were sub-offices of the Toronto-based ministry in Ontario communities. We've changed that. We've put representatives of the community at play, exercising a role of influence for good in a community.

So again, if you wanted to put in place a plan to make dramatic cuts to health care, you've got to get rid of the LHINs, because they're going to stand in the way of those health cuts. They'll be opposed to reducing hospital beds; they'll be opposed to nurse-firings; they'll be opposed to hospital closures.

We have LHINs in place. We support Ontarians, we support their LHINs because they're standing up for local community health care, and we'll continue to find ways to work with them.

## LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Again, my question is to the Premier: Our freedom-of-information records show that bureaucrats at unelected, unaccountable, anonymous local health integration networks like to keep untendered contracts in the family.

Take Barry Monaghan: The former CEO of the Toronto Central LHIN walked away from what the 2008 sunshine list reported to be a \$351,000 salary to become a health care consultant and was handed an untendered contract from the Mississauga LHIN. Actually, it was two untendered contracts: On the very same day, the Mississauga LHIN handed him a second sweetheart deal covering the same time period.

If getting caught allowing this double-dipping to happen isn't why you scrapped the public review of the LHINs, then what are you hiding?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, this is part of an ongoing effort to malign the LHINs and the people in their communities who choose to serve in those.

My honourable colleague made reference to these anonymous people. There are 105 current Ontarians who have been appointed to serve on their local health integration network. All of those appointments are referred to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Of the 105 current appointees, the Conservative Party only called seven to the standing committee, and they were in favour of each and every one of those. So you can't have it both ways: You can't say that you support community-based health care, you can't say you support Ontarians who come to the aid of their community health care and at the same time malign them. Either you are in favour of local health integration networks, local influence on health care or you're not. They believe LHINs stand in the way of quality health care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** To the point of this question, which is that the Premier promised that there would be no more untendered contracts, and clearly they're continuing to happen. Just like with eHealth, work is being built on contracts before they're even being signed, and they're untendered. Our freedom-of-information records show that you let it happen again in 2009, when the Mississauga LHIN did two untendered contract extensions on the same day: one paying \$42,000 for three months' work and one paying \$42,000 for two months' work. No wonder Monaghan left the Toronto Central LHIN and his measly \$351,000 salary.

Did you scrap the public review of the LHINs to protect Barry Monaghan or to protect yourself?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, just to repeat what the Minister of Health has already said, we believe that it



is only sensible and realistic to have a review conducted once the LHINs have fully assumed all of their responsibilities, and they have yet to do that. We've already put a review in place. KPMG took a look at this. They've come up with some 47 separate recommendations. We've adopted all of them. They're all either implemented or under way.

Again, fundamentally, what this is all about is, if your agenda is truly to find savings in health care, if you want to make cuts to health care—if you want to close hospitals, if you want to fire nurses and if you want to reduce hospital beds—you've got to get rid of the LHINs. So we can expect an extended strategy and series of tactics now deployed by the Conservative Party to undermine public confidence in the LHINs, because they stand in the way of this party's agenda to make cuts to our health care. That's exactly why we will continue to support our LHINs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'd suggest that the Premier is imputing motive here on our side, which is clearly not true. We are not in favour of cutting public health care. We are not in favour of making cuts in that area.

But again, back to the question: Our—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Member from Simcoe North.

Start the clock.

Please continue.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Our FOI records also show that Premier McGuinty was paying Monaghan for a super-LHIN he called the LHIN collaborative. Others assigned to work on the super-LHIN are a who's who of the untendered-contract feeding frenzy at eHealth. Matt Anderson is on the eHealth board and related to Michael Guerriere, who got sweetheart deals from eHealth and the LHINs. Ken Deane approved untendered contracts at eHealth. John McKinley blocked the auditor's eHealth investigation. Did the Premier scrap the public review of the LHINs because McKinley blocked the Ombudsman? Or was it to bury proof of this year's sunshine list executives turned consultants? Or does he have something else to hide?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Would you like to super-size that LHIN—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final warning for the member from Renfrew.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Durham.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Somebody else want to be on borrowed time?

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Those Ontarians who take responsibility for LHIN activities are appointees. There

are 105 of them, and we're lucky to have them rise to the occasion and assume those responsibilities.

I want to come back to the theme here, which I think is very important. They're going to be selective in terms of trying to malign or demean certain individuals, but the people who are taking responsibility for the decisions are 105 Ontarians who have agreed to serve on their local health integration network. They believe in what we believe, which is that the community itself should be lending shape to health care policy so that it best serves the interests of the community. They want to go back to a system where you put regional offices of the Ministry of Health in communities so you can dictate from on high. We have a different approach. We believe in local integration. We believe in local quality—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question is to the Premier. Last week's budget will leave families scrambling to deal with more closed emergency rooms, more closed clinics and more delayed surgeries. We're joined today by patients from across Ontario who are here in the west members' gallery who are feeling the crunch.

My question is this: Is the Premier prepared to look these patients in the eye and yet again deny that he's making cuts to front-line health care services that people rely on every single day?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question from my honourable colleague and I want to remind her—and perhaps she would use this information to remind Ontarians as well—about our accurate record when it comes to health care. No government has ever escalated investment in health care more quickly than ours in the history of our province. We've increased funding for hospitals by over 40% since 2003. We've hired thousands more nurses. We have invested heavily in building new hospitals and expanding existing hospitals. We've got wait times down for MRIs, CTs, knee operations, hip operations, cardiac operations, cataract procedures and cancer surgeries as well. That is our record when it—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier forgets that real people have to live with the consequences of his cut-backs. Marelyn, who's here today, had to watch as a family member who suffered a stroke languished in the Niagara Falls ER for seven days. That hospital has been overwhelmed since the closure of emergency rooms at Fort Erie and Port Colborne. Will the Premier look at Marelyn and tell her that her front-line health care services aren't actually being hurt?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There's no doubt about it: There is always more work to do. One of the exercises that we're going to have to participate in together has to do with how we can find a way to continue to ensure that



we can continue to fund the growth in our health care system.

Twenty years ago, when I got here, it was 32 cents on the dollar that went into health care; now it's 46 cents. They tell us that shortly it's going to be 70 cents. That will compromise our ability to fund our kids' schools. It will compromise our ability to invest in our roads and our bridges, in supports for our vulnerable and investments in economic growth. So that's an important conversation we're all going to have to participate in very shortly.

But I can say that along the way we will continue to find more ways to invest more dollars in the health care system, to find efficiencies where that makes sense, and to find ways to improve the quality of care we deliver.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier talks about money that's being thrown into the health care system, but it's not being wisely invested, and that's the problem we have in this province.

Marelyn's story, unfortunately, is just one of many, many stories. Mr. Richer suffered a heart attack and had to be transferred three times to get the care he needed. He and countless other Ontarians live in constant fear that the ambulance or emergency care when they need it is not going to be there for them. How dare this Premier try to justify cuts that are leaving families all over Ontario coping with closures, coping with cutbacks and coping with lost services?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, \$113 million more I don't call a cut, and I don't think my honourable colleague, were she to consider it carefully, would either.

Hospital funding is up by 50% over the last seven years. It's going up by another 4.9% this year. That includes a 1.5% increase in the overall base funding formula to meet the service requirements of hospitals. We've added more hospital beds, and about 2,000 more are now in the works. We've opened 8,000 new long-term-care-home beds, and there are almost 2,000 more in the works.

Now we're going to turn our mind towards innovating, to ensuring that we can provide quality. We've done a lot to increase access. For example, 900,000 more Ontarians now have access to a family doctor. But we want to do a lot more to ensure that the care they are getting is in fact high-quality.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's cool comfort for the patients who are here today.

#### EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My second question is to the Premier as well. While concerned citizens have watched their ERs close and their loved ones spend weeks in emergency rooms, some people have actually seen salary windfalls in the province of Ontario in the health care sector. Between 2003, when the Premier came to office, and 2008, the average salary of hospital executives increased by 36%. Does the Premier think it's fair to be

closing ERs while health dollars are spent on seven-figure salaries?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think everyone who enjoys the privilege of working in public service and is paid for by the provincial taxpayer has a responsibility to be accountable and to ensure that the salary they are receiving, the compensation, can always be qualified as fair.

The approach that we are bringing through this budget, as you are well aware, is to lead by example. Everybody in this House is having their pay frozen for three years. What we're asking of everybody else in the public sector is that we freeze their wages for two years. We think that's fair.

The commitment we are also making is that all those savings will be reinvested in our schools, in our hospitals and in our other public services. We think that's a responsibility that we share and one that I would invite all Ontarians in public service to assume.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Clifford Nordal, the CEO at St. Joseph's hospital and London Health Sciences Centre, made more than \$700,000 last year. He's retiring at the end of this year, and Londoners have been told that two CEOs are going to be hired to replace him. Does the Premier think it's right that cancer patients in London lose their nurses while \$1.5 million goes to paying two new CEOs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** As my honourable colleague will understand, we don't set those salaries. Those are determined locally by the hospital boards. I know that she would want to join me in encouraging all those people who work on our hospital boards to be very careful when it comes to making determinations about those salary levels, what is appropriate and what is inappropriate, not only being mindful of our economic circumstances, but also being mindful all the time of how hard families work to contribute their tax dollars to their precious public services. So I know my colleague would want to join me in sending that important message to those people who are making those decisions about those salaries.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier talks a good game about restraint, yet only patients see it, while hospital CEOs continue to cash in.

I have a very simple request of the Premier: If he is serious, will he cancel all bonuses for hospital CEOs this year?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, my honourable colleague, I'm sure, will want to understand that this is a matter between hospital boards and their employees. I'm wondering if there are any other agreements she would call upon us to interfere with. It's only one small step from private contractual arrangements to those involving collective agreements, and I'm wondering if my colleague is going to take the next step, perhaps in another question, and ask me to now interfere with collective agreements.

There is some sanctity associated with these kinds of contracts, and as a matter of principle we think we have to honour contracts that are already in place.



## LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Premier. The McGuinty Liberals have diverted \$176 million from front-line health care to salaries and administration at his unelected and unaccountable health bureaucracies known as the LHINs. In fact, in just three years the number of executives at the LHINs who earn more than \$100,000 a year has more than doubled. The sunshine list for 2008 reports that Barry Monaghan made \$351,000 from a LHIN he didn't even work at.

My question is a simple one: Did the Premier cancel the public review of the LHINs because his LHINs are the new all-stars in today's sunshine list?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Once again, the members opposite continue to attack the local health integration networks. Those networks are in place to provide better care for patients. The work they do is all about improving care for patients as they transition from one part of our health care system to another part of the health care system. The work they're doing is very important for the future of our health care system and it's important for the people today who, as they go through a period of health care, would have a time when they need the intensive support available in a hospital; then there would be a time when they could use home care and other community supports. The whole goal of the LHINs is to ease that transition. It's important work, and it's important that it be done in the community.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The \$351,000 that Barry Monaghan scooped from the Toronto Central LHIN is the kind of severance package that an HST collector could only dream about. Over that same time frame where the 2006-07 sunshine list grew by 150%, total salaries and compensation at the LHINs grew by 213%. That doesn't even include the millions being handed out in untendered contracts and what we have now found out to be untendered contract extensions with consultants.

So my question to the Premier: How many more millions of dollars will be diverted from front-line care to pay the rich executive salaries of unelected and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I said, the party opposite has a very different vision of the future of health care in this province than the people on this side. Their agenda is crystal clear: They will deny that they want to cut health care in this province, but their stated position is to freeze spending. Anyone who works in health care understands that a freeze is a cut.

Make no mistake about it: We are committed to continue to improve health care in this province, to continue to improve access, to continue to bring down wait times, to get better value for the money we spend in health care and to focus on quality. Our health care record speaks for itself, and, sadly, so does theirs.

## FIRE SAFETY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. We're all concerned about the safety of seniors in retirement homes. There have been three horrific retirement home fires in the past few years, causing death and permanent injury. Much of this could have been alleviated if the government had required mandatory sprinkler systems in all retirement homes across our province. Yesterday, the government introduced a bill that falls drastically short.

Will the government take this bill back to the drawing board and implement mandatory fire sprinkler systems in all retirement homes in our province?

1100

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community Safety.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** It's a very important question and it requires an answer that will instill some confidence in our fire safety system. I have that confidence.

When we look at the record of investments that we've made in fire safety in the province of Ontario, I think our government can be very proud. When we look at the changes to the Ontario building code and the Ontario fire code, I think we can be very proud of those changes.

Certainly, there is no question: Sprinklers are an important tool. They are one tool in fire safety. We have to ensure that we provide a fire safety plan—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That was an interesting reply. The Ontario firefighters, whom you were just talking about, and fire chiefs across this province are strongly urging that sprinkler systems in all retirement homes be mandatory immediately. Lives are at risk, loved ones are concerned, yet the government seems to be passing the buck between ministries.

How many more lives have to be sacrificed before this government does the right thing, steps up to the plate and legislates mandatory sprinkler systems in all retirement homes immediately?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The member referenced the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, so I want to read from a letter that Fred LeBlanc, the president, sent to me. He said, "We are concerned that there will be too much emphasis on and faith placed in technology, resulting in a false sense of security." They are not a magic bullet. They are only one of the many tools required to adequately protect the residents in the event of a structural fire.

We agree with the professional firefighters that they're an important tool, but they are only one tool in the arsenal to fight fires.

## NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** My question is to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Recently in our budget, I was very pleased to learn that your ministry will be pro-



viding \$15 million for infrastructure upgrades to the 288-kilometre Huron Central Railway line from Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury. As you know, the economy of northern Ontario is also struggling, and this investment is essential to businesses in the region.

In yesterday's Sault Star, Brenda Stenta, spokesperson for Essar Steel Algoma, said, "The government has demonstrated their commitment to a vital piece of infrastructure, and without the rail system to transport product, Essar Steel would be putting an additional 350 to 400 trucks on the road per week, something that has negative environmental and social costs."

This investment secures 45 direct jobs, 100 indirect jobs and supports thousands of workers and businesses along the rail line in northeastern Ontario.

Minister, can you elaborate on other infrastructure investments that we are making—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to begin by thanking the member from Sault Ste. Marie, who has done a great job on this project. He's been a relentless advocate for the Huron Central rail project; he really has. I know his community is really excited about this, as are we.

This government recognizes the importance of this project to Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and all communities in between. It's a critical link for northeastern Ontario that will help expand business and project jobs. Without this funding, the Huron Central rail line was in danger of being shut down. The closure of this vital link would have had detrimental effects on local communities. That's why, in our 2010 budget, we committed \$15 million to ward capital repairs for this very important line.

Again, I thank the honourable member—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** This is great news for our region. I want to thank you and our Minister of Finance for helping to address in a very real way the needs of northern Ontario. I certainly hope that my NDP colleagues from northern Ontario, who have been calling for these types of investments, will support these investments in our budget.

The northern industrial electricity rate program, averaging \$150 million annually, will help make large industrial power users more competitive and will help to protect jobs. The mayor of Sault Ste. Marie, John Rowsell, said, "This is absolutely great for Essar Steel and I'm hoping it will make a difference for St. Marys Paper."

Minister, can you comment on how this energy program and others contained in the budget will assist industry and our residents?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We're introducing the northern—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I'm trying to understand how your question and the supplementary are related. They're not.

New question.

## LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Premier.

Yesterday, the Premier ducked accountability for untendered contracts that he allowed the LHINs to hand out after his on-again, off-again ban. Seven consecutive questions were pawned off to the Minister of Health. In fact, the Minister of Health may want to take a look at the Hansard from September 23, 2009, and then have a chat with the member for Don Valley East to find out what happened to him the last time Dalton McGuinty forced a minister to carry the can.

So, to the Premier, a very simple question: Who made the call to scrap the public review of the LHINs? Was it the Minister of Health or was it you?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As we've talked about much, today and throughout the week, the LHINs are a very important part of our vision for the future of health care in this province. It's very important that we give them the time they need to get established, to do the work, so that when we do review the LHINs with an all-party committee of the House, we will have a full understanding of what they are doing well and what we need to change in the act to ensure that they do it even better. The appropriate thing to do is to make sure that they have the full range of their mandate in place before we start that review. That will take place in two years' time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** So I guess the Minister of Health cancelled the review, according to the Premier. But what Ontarians need to know is if they can bring out a magnifying glass to read the fine print in what the Premier and his ministers say is accountability.

The Ministry of Health accounts for more than half the provincial budget, and these LHINs are your babies, but just like with eHealth, as soon as the tough questions get asked about patient dollars being wasted, Premier McGuinty beats a hasty retreat to his thinking place and leaves it to others to explain the unexplainable. No wonder caucus morale over there is lower than a garter snake on a backcountry road.

André Marin is on to you, so you want him out the door; and we are on to you, so you're blocking the public review of the LHINs.

So I've got another question: What are you trying to hide, Premier?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I must say that I'm having difficulty pulling the question out from that little rant. Anyway, let me try again.

The LHINs are a very important piece of our health care system. They knit together the health care services that patients in this province need. The LHINs are there to improve the course of care of patients.

We, in this province, have too many people, for example, who are in hospital beds and would be better served in the community with home care, in long-term care or in one of the range of options available to them.



The LHINs are the organizations that are really responsible for driving the improvements in health care that will help those people move into the most appropriate and best level of care. The work of the LHINs is critically important.

### MINISTRY GRANTS

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is for Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. In April 2007, the Bengali Cultural Society, a group with absolutely impeccable Liberal ties, received \$250,000 of taxpayers' money granted to provide community services for the growing Bangladeshi community. The cheque was turned over to the Bengali Cultural Society's partner agency and a building was purchased in 2008. It has now been three full years since the money was doled out. Can the minister explain why there are still no programs serving the Bangladeshi community?

1110

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I was pleased to speak with the member from Beaches–East York about this issue several days ago. As he of course is aware, the Bengali Cultural Society indeed was one of the organizations that in 2006–07 received funding for multi-year projects. The society received funding that was used to purchase a new facility, in partnership with COSTI Immigrant Services. The Bengali society reported that the funds have been successfully spent for the intended purpose, and the ministry has closed the file on this grant. We hope that both organizations continue to meet the needs of our newcomers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Over the past six months, I have spoken personally to two ministers and the staff of two ministers' offices, and they've told me the same thing you said today: The file is closed.

There was no follow-up, even after I brought this situation to the government's attention in January, and no follow-up today. Our worst predictions have been realized: \$250,000 of taxpayers' money have been handed out and aren't being used for the purposes for which they were intended.

How much more Liberal slush fund money has been mishandled, and why is this government washing its hands of the blatant squandering of millions of taxpayers' dollars?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Again, I was pleased to speak with the member opposite about this issue several days ago. He knows that the Auditor General conducted a review of the 2006–07 year-end reinvestment process and provided a thorough report that stated there was no evidence that any organization received a grant because it had political ties.

We have also improved the process for organizations wanting to apply for this type of funding in the future, in accordance with the auditor's recommendations.

The society in question, the Bengali Cultural Society, issued their final report early last year, indicating that the

funds had been expended according to the intended purposes of the grant. The ministry has closed the file.

### USE OF TASERS

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** My question is for Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the member for the great city of Sudbury. Minister, I am aware that officers who have access to conducted energy weapons find them to be useful in apprehending those suspected of misconduct. However, in discussion with my constituents, I'm also aware of the concerns they have about how and when police should be using them.

Minister, you have said publicly that your ministry initiated a review to look in detail at CEW training requirements, reporting procedures and precautionary measures. Yesterday you announced a new guideline on the use of conducted energy weapons in Ontario and that the province will continue to take a measured approach to the use of CEWs.

Is this new guideline based on the recommendations from that report, and how will the guidelines ensure Ontario families in my community stay safe?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I want to thank the member from Toronto Centre, Glen Murray, for the question. It's an important question, and he's an important partner in community safety.

Ontario is a national leader in the training and use of conducted energy weapons. Our new guidelines are, without question, the most comprehensive in Canada.

These changes are based on the recommendations from our government's review, a review that consulted stakeholders and partners from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the chiefs of police, police associations and advocacy groups, and pulled information from national and international studies.

Our new guidelines will also mandate that all CEW users and instructors at the police college get the consistent training they require—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** I am pleased to hear that Ontario continues to be a national leader in this area and that our province-wide guideline and new training practices will go a long way towards protecting both Ontarian families and our police officers.

I understand the review also concluded that CEWs are a less lethal use-of-force option. Currently in Ontario, the use of CEWs is authorized only to front-line supervisors and various specialized first response teams, such as tactical units and hostage rescue teams.

Even with Ontario's measured approach, I see from media reports that there are mixed views on the use of CEWs. Some people are calling for an all-out moratorium on their use, while others are calling on the government to expand them to all front-line officers.

Minister, can you elaborate on this issue for us?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The member has touched on a very, very important issue. Police officers face any num-



ber of challenging and unique situations every day. They use their judgment, experience and training to determine how to deal with these situations. We want to make sure that our new guidelines work for those who use them. Therefore, we think that the next logical step is to evaluate how this consistent and new training standard and guideline is working for police.

At present, there are no plans to expand CEW use. My ministry will continue to monitor their use in Ontario, continue to collaborate with our policing partners and continue to provide input into the national research study.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, a couple of weeks ago we were at a meeting with the Bruce County Federation of Agriculture, and their number one priority was the risk management program.

Since then, we've had a budget, and I know you have really been in the media, telling how wonderful the budget was. In this budget, you did pick up the daycare that the feds dumped on you. Also, on the radio, you mentioned that your ministry received a lot more money.

I know in your heart of hearts you want to help agriculture; I know that. Madam Minister, today, will you announce the risk management program without the feds—screw the feds. Don't worry about them. You don't need them. You have the extra money now. Will you announce this program immediately today?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Thank you very much for the question. I want to begin with: It was a wonderful budget. I say to you that that support that we have shown the agricultural community has been always there and continues to be in this budget. We saw an increase of \$150 million in the ag budget.

I can tell you that that did not happen throughout Canada, but we stand with our farmers. We know that the suite of programs that is available today, quite frankly, isn't working. We know that what they're looking for is bankability, predictability and stability. We will work with our farmers, and we are working with the coalition.

I look to add even more information in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary? The member from Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is also, of course, to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, you know that the federal government believes that the proposed risk management program would have trade implications if it was implemented nationally. This is an Ontario problem that needs an Ontario solution. Our farmers are competing against people from across Canada who have the support of their provincial government.

Minister, you aren't a lobbyist; you are a level of government. When are you going to start acting like it and help our farmers?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'll tell you that I'll stand with my farmers. We recognize in Ontario that regional diversity is the way of the future—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not helpful, the member from Thornhill. Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of the Environment.

Minister of Agriculture?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** This is really a critical piece. When I hear that question coming from that side of the House, I have to assume that they stand by Minister Ritz's comments. Minister Ritz's comments were that 80% of our farmers are not being affected by the agricultural programs that are available today. It is not providing assistance; 80% of the people are doing just fine.

1120

We say on this side of the House that the programs aren't working. The suite of programs needs work. We are going to continue the work with the coalition on all of the commodities, sitting at the table. We are going to come forward. The consultation begins with the federal government. I'm encouraging all farmers—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The clock will stop.

Minister of the Environment. I remind the honourable minister that when I'm standing, she's not to be standing.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, you asked.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I didn't ask.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It has been a while since he's been thrown out.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** How about yourself, member from Welland?

New question.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. This government's decision to delay transit projects threatens hundreds of jobs at Thunder Bay's Bombardier plant. More than 400 streetcars were to be assembled in Thunder Bay to operate on Toronto transit lines that are now in budgetary limbo. With the hopes of so many riding on these transit projects, will the Premier admit that he has made a very serious mistake and immediately restore the \$4 billion in transit project funding that was cut—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The member from Thunder Bay will withdraw the comment.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I withdraw, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** And this is a final warning for the member from Thunder Bay as well.

Please continue.



**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** So the question was, will the Premier admit that he has made a serious mistake and immediately restore the \$4 billion of transit project funding that was cut in last week's budget?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, just to correct my honourable colleague, and she may want to take advantage of the supplementary to admit to this, we're not talking about a cut here; we're talking about stretching out an investment in a way that's more affordable for us. We wanted to do full-day learning all at once. We couldn't, so we've stretched that investment out over a number of years. We'd love to be able to make this dramatic multi-billion dollar investment in TTC all at once, but we can't. It's affordable for us to do it over a number of years. That's all we're doing here. We haven't cut a single program. In fact, we're proud to have invested \$9.3 billion in public transit as a government. We look forward to investing in those projects, and I'm sure there will be more along the way.

Again, we had to make a choice as to whether we could find savings by stretching out this kind of program or making cuts to our hospitals and schools. We said no to those kinds of cuts and yes to stretching out this investment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I've talked to people who work at the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay, and they say that delaying the streetcars for the new lines will cause serious harm to their employment prospects. They say that keeping to the present schedule will allow the company to invest in crucial plant upgrades which will enable Bombardier to secure orders worldwide.

The Premier needs to realize that the long-term future of the plant and hundreds of jobs for families in Thunder Bay are at stake here. Will he restore the transit funding he cut in last week's budget, or will he stubbornly stick to a wrong-headed decision that could kill hundreds of good-paying jobs in Thunder Bay?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, we think, we believe, we know that the decision we have made is prudent, it's realistic, it's responsible and it's fair, given the circumstances. We've merely decided to stretch out these investments over an extended period of time.

But I do want to remind my honourable colleague that she does lead a party which voted against our investment in a TTC subway expansion to York region. I recall visiting that very same Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay. I recall meeting with the workers there. I recall them voicing their great displeasure at the NDP for opposing that investment. So I find it passing strange that today the member would say she's against our plan—our reasonable, responsible plan—to stretch out this investment over time, which will in fact result eventually in those new jobs.

#### FIRST NATIONS

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. I understand that today,

March 31, we have the occasion to celebrate National Aboriginal Languages Day.

The day was established by the Assembly of First Nations in 1989 to create awareness across Canada of the languages of First Nation peoples and to build support for their preservation. We must support this effort. Through supporting language preservation, we are assisting aboriginal peoples and strengthening the cultures and traditions that are part of the very foundation of Canada and Ontario.

What is the purpose of National Aboriginal Day, and why is it important that we celebrate it, Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Meegwetch. Nyawah. Thank you very much for the question. I am honoured to stand here and celebrate with all of us National Aboriginal Languages Day. I join the First Nations and the Chiefs of Ontario. I join the Anishinabek Mushkegowuk Onkwehonwe Language Commission of Ontario in celebrating this.

Language and culture are essential to our identity—every people's identity. It is extremely important that we not only preserve but celebrate who we are, and by preserving, protecting and enhancing language and cultural identity, we actually preserve, protect and enhance our own identity and make for a stronger future.

It is extremely important that we all recognize the importance of this day, not only to First Nations but to ourselves.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I understand that Cree and Ojibway are the first languages spoken by many children in First Nations families across Ontario. Cree is a language spoken in many First Nations in Ontario's mid- and Far North, and Ojibway is the language of many First Nation communities in the near north, northwestern and southwestern Ontario, but I was surprised to learn that 11 other First Nation languages are in danger of extinction in the province today. How is the province of Ontario supporting the revival and preservation of the aboriginal language?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Again, thank you very much. There is a history, which unfortunately was not supported either in Ontario or throughout Canada, of the preservation of aboriginal language, First Nation language and culture. The residential schools, for example, were a very sorry and sad blot on our history. We are individually and collectively overcoming the effects of that.

I think the first way we stand to protect and preserve is to support initiatives such as today's. But it's not simply an initiative of a day; it's an initiative of every day. There is a new website launched by the organization to enable people to understand what the languages are and the interrelation between the language of First Nations and Canada. The very word "Canada" derives from a Huron word.

We have a bright future as a country. First Nations have a bright future. Our future—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.



## RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. One year ago, your government announced its so-called Open for Business plan to cut red tape for small businesses. You promised a 25% cut in regulations over 24 months, yet in 12 months you have nothing to show for this promise—no plans, no action, no cuts in regulations.

Minister, when are you going to start working on this promise?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm delighted to find a critic on the other side of the House. If I may say, our Open for Business strategy has been an aggressive, very innovative way for our government to link up with industry directly, bring industry to the table, actually do that by sector, so that we can talk about their priority areas of concern and actually solve the problems. I'm delighted to say that we've made some very good progress, and in your supplementary, I'd be happy to share some of that with you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Time is running out on your promise to help small businesses. It's already been a full year with no action, yet you even recycled your promise to cut red tape in your Open Ontario plan, or what sounds to me more and more like "oops." You haven't cut red tape since you announced the Open for Business plan, so why should anyone believe you now with your "oops" plan?

1130

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm actually very pleased to suggest to you that the number of business organizations that we have been dealing with for the last several months is growing—a number of associations across a number of sectors, which are in our office on a regular basis.

I have to tell you that I remember the Red Tape Commission of the past, when you were the government. It amounted to three guys in trench coats taking a photo op. The difference here is that we actually bring industry to the table and move forward with the elimination of regulations, all the while strengthening the government's role in assisting to improve business conditions and the business environment.

I am delighted to sit down with this member in particular, and we can share with her not only the plans for the future but what we have been able to accomplish in dialoguing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre du Travail. Recently, National Grocers, part of Loblaw Companies Ltd., announced that it would shut its doors at its Sudbury warehouse, putting 100 workers out of work. They will join the 6,000 workers who lost their jobs in Sudbury last year. Most of these workers who are

being terminated have over 20 years' experience, yet they will only get the very minimum severance, as dictated by the Ontario Employment Standards Act.

Why is the Minister of Labour allowing those workers to be treated so unfairly?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I have to say: Whenever a worker loses their job, we are all hurt. It hurts the individual, their family, the community and this province. But I can also say to the member that our labour relations record here in this province, in terms of working with labour groups, employers and employees, is the strongest it has ever been, the best it has ever been in over 30 years. That's because, through the Ministry of Labour, we do all that we can to assist the parties when they're negotiating agreements, but also, through our employment standards office, to ensure that workers get what they are owed, to ensure that workers get the rights and pay they are owed through the Ministry of Labour.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** If this is Ontario's best, we're in trouble. On the same day the company offered Sudbury workers the bare minimum severance as dictated by law, they offered their Quebec employees faced with the same scenario "well in excess of statutory minimums, as well as relocation assistance."

As part of the Open Ontario plan, the McGuinty government is telling corporations that they have carte blanche to treat workers unfairly, to give them the bare minimum. Meanwhile, in Quebec, the provincial government sets a different, more progressive tone toward the treatment of labour. Companies in Quebec wouldn't dare give their workers the minimum severance, but in Ontario it is tolerated and, I would even say that it is encouraged.

My question is simple: When will the McGuinty government stand up for workers and ensure they get a fair and decent severance when large corporations decide to restructure?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** To the member, the McGuinty government stands up for workers every single day. Our Employment Standards Act is the most progressive employment standards legislation in all of Canada. Ontario—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** The member may want to hear this. Ontario is the only province or territory that actually legislates severance pay, I say to the member opposite. It's absolutely unacceptable when companies are not adhering to their responsibilities. We want to ensure, and we do ensure, that the rights of workers are upheld in this province.

## AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I know that the minister is working hard to bring the importance of the Buy Local initiatives to Ontario consumers. Farmers in my riding appreciate the Pick Ontario Freshness strategy, as it aims



to open up the local market for them and helps them get a better return on their hard work and the resources they put into the high-quality foods they produce.

The recently announced budget moves the Open Ontario plan forward, a plan that includes looking to create new opportunities to encourage Ontarians to buy local. We know that everyone has a role to play—government, industries, stakeholders, producers and retailers.

Minister, could you please tell the members of this House more about our Buy Local strategy and about some of the results we are seeing across this province?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Thank you for the question. Our strategy to increase awareness of and demand for fresh, delicious Ontario food products is working. Local food benefits the local economy and our personal health.

I want to talk about the results. Sobeys Ontario works closely with Foodland Ontario to promote Ontario producers and products through the Ontario Fresh Pick program at Foodland and IGA; and Grown in Ontario for Sobeys, a program at Sobeys, Longo's and Highland Farms. Both prominently feature Ontario fresh produce and home-grown Ontario meats. Market research on the Foodland Ontario program: 90% recognition for Foodland Ontario's symbol, and 51% of principal grocery shoppers report that they are actually buying more fresh Ontario foods than previously purchased. If we—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** Members of this House know that goods produced by Ontario farmers are among the freshest, safest and best-quality in the world. As we have moved forward with our Buy Local strategy, my constituents are more and more aware of the benefits of buying food that is produced in Ontario.

We also know that promoting Ontario foods in new markets will help support our agri-food sector and all the benefits that go along with that, including a stronger farming and food production industry as well as healthier rural communities. Farmers in my riding appreciate the direction that our government is taking in partnering and working closely with them to help address the challenges that the sector has faced.

Could the minister please provide this House with more information about how we will work with our agri-food sector to seek new markets for Ontario-grown produce?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** The Open Ontario plan aims to ensure that rural Ontario benefits; that rural Ontario is ready to seize on the opportunities emerging from the global recession.

The activities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs directly impact export sales and job creation. We continue to support growth and expansion in our agri-food sector to open up new markets outside this province. In total, Ontario agri-food exports for 2009 totalled \$8.9 billion. Value-added, consumer-oriented products represent the strength of Ontario's food processing industry. Based on third party research undertaken with Ontario's exporters, for each dollar spent on the minis-

try's export program, more than \$20 is generated in new export sales.

We'll continue to work with our processors and producers. Our product is ready to be available throughout the world—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: During question period today, the member for Sault Ste. Marie asked a question of the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and referenced our most recent budget. I recognize that your rulings are not appealable, but I am asking you to review Hansard, as you have the prerogative to do, to look at whether or not his supplementary question was appropriate. I do believe it was, given that he referenced—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the honourable member for her point of order, and I'm certain that the honourable member is not intending to challenge the Chair in the Chair's decision. I stand by my decision.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome to the House today Dr. Mohammad Ashraf. He's the secretary-general of the Islamic Society of North America. He is accompanied by Muhammed Haroon and Humaira Hamayun. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### GENERAL MOTORS OF CANADA

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I rise today to speak with respect to 240 Canadian General Motors dealers who received notice in May 2009 that their dealer sales and service agreement would not be renewed beyond October 31, 2010. Many of these dealers invested millions at the request of the company and were never paid a personal visit or consulted in any manner prior to receiving the termination news.

Here's a quote: "We were simply energetic, profitable franchises that were discarded as a quick solution, and I am questioning how this measure can be 'cost saving' for the corporation." This came from a former GM dealer in my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk. He goes on to say, "We operated as independent businesses purchasing parts, vehicles, and tools from General Motors on a daily basis. How can that be a financial burden to the parent company?"

Dealers were afforded only five to six days to accept a wind-down agreement that did not cover employee severance, investments in the dealership or compensation



for future earnings. Seeking proper legal advice in a matter of days was impossible.

General Motors US has recently announced that they made an error and will be reinstating 661 dealers. Will this government assist GM Canada to work out arrangements with the 240 Canadian dealerships that will satisfy all parties? For the sake of Ontario's economy, is it not in this government's best interests to give the Canadian GM network some attention?

### RACE RELATIONS

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I am pleased to rise in the Legislature today to speak of the winning students from across Durham region who showcased their creativity at the 2010 Race Relations Forum in Pickering on Wednesday, March 24.

In September, the Pickering Advisory Committee on Race Relations and Equity partnered with the Durham District School Board and the Durham Catholic District School Board to present a creative arts contest called In Your Words and Expressions. Students from grades 2 through 12 throughout Durham were invited to submit a written or creative arts piece based on the statement, "My perfect world is ...."

A panel of judges representing the written word, music and art reviewed more than 150 entries and selected winners for each age category. The winning students shared their entries at the forum on March 24 in the Pickering Civic Complex.

The event commemorated March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and included the Honourable Jean Augustine, Fairness Commissioner of Ontario, as the guest speaker.

The race relations committee is made up of municipal leaders, school board representatives, community cultural associations, community appointees and the students. They have worked closely over the years with many different groups and organizations, particularly youth, to promote racial and ethnic harmony in Pickering.

I warmly congratulate the winners and all of the participants.

### FASHION INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to rise today to speak about the fashion event I co-hosted this morning with the member from Parkdale-High Park and the Fashion Design Council of Canada.

This morning, both a fashion breakfast and a press conference took place. The focus of the events was driven towards having fashion and design included in Ontario's cultural mandate so that fashion designers would be eligible to apply for arts and cultural grants. The issue here is not to ask for more money; it's simply to see the scope of the mandate widened so that members of the fashion community could apply for the cultural grants that are already available.

In a time when our province is struggling to hold on to the jobs that we have, it's time for us to think outside the box. We have heard from the McGuinty government about the need to build a knowledge-based economy and to cultivate our cultural community, and to build on their potential. This is an opportunity to do just that.

We're currently in the middle of LG Fashion Week in Toronto, showcasing the amazing fashion talent here at home. If you have a chance to attend any one of their fashion events, you will quickly see the potential for this industry. It's enormous in economic terms, from the fashion designers to hair and makeup artists, photographers, marketers and everything else in between.

Quebec has already recognized this and, in so doing, saw the employment rate in the fashion industry double in less than a year.

Fashion has already come so far in Ontario on its own. Imagine the contribution this industry could be making to our economy if we were to make this one small change. We're calling on the McGuinty government to recognize this and make this change now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm sure the member from Welland was at the breakfast this morning.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Listen, I'm a fan of fashion. What can I say? The problem is, one could become a victim of fashion.

### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I stand here to tell you that while Dalton McGuinty, the Premier of Ontario, wants to scrap the review process of LHINs, I say, let's just cut to the chase and scrap the LHINs. They do no one any good other than create a firewall for this government from the anger in community after community where emergency rooms are being shut down, where core hospital services are being devastated and where hospitals are disappearing.

We had some of the Yellow Shirt Brigade here at Queen's Park this morning, the brigadistas, people like Fiona McMurren and Marelyn Athoe.

While they're joining the Yellow Shirt Brigade from Niagara that's been fighting tooth and nail to keep hospitals open, like the emergency rooms of Fort Erie and Port Colborne, they're going to be here on April 7, along with the Ontario Health Coalition, making sure that Minister Deb Matthews—when she's speaking down at the posh Royal York hotel to the Canadian Club, of all places, about health care, they're going to be out there demonstrating and picketing and letting the Minister of Health know that there are folks across this province who don't believe this government for a minute—not for a second—when this government says that it's doing anything to sustain health care, never mind improve it.

I'm encouraging folks down in Niagara to be at the Fort Erie Leisureplex at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, April 7, to get a bus to Toronto; be at the Welland market at 8:30 a.m. and get on a bus and come on up to Toronto; be at



the St. Catharines Pen Centre at 9 a.m. and get on a bus and come up to Toronto, and let them know what you really mean.

### GOVERNMENT MAILINGS

**Mr. David Ramsay:** I'd like to ask members for support of a private member's resolution I'm going to introduce tomorrow. It's going to ask the federal Minister of Transport to issue a directive to Canada Post to amend the Consumer Choice Program of Canada Post that allows, and rightfully so, people receiving their mail to refuse unaddressed mail.

What I discovered in doing a referendum question in my riding was that MPPs' and MLAs' mail right across the country and municipal councillors' mail gets blocked with this policy, but lo and behold, MPs' unaddressed mail gets through. So there's an issue of inequity here.

I would ask the federal government to direct Canada Post to make it equal so that all of us elected officials of all three levels of government in this country have the democratic freedom to have our unaddressed mail received by our constituents.

To me, the policy should be consistent, and I certainly respect people's ability to block unaddressed mail. Obviously there's a lot of junk mail out there that people don't want, but many times the literature that municipal councillors, provincial members of Parliament and our MPs deliver is of great value, and I think all three levels should be treated the same.

### ZACHARY WINKLER

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I rise today to recognize a young man from my riding who is one of the recipients of this year's Junior Citizen of the Year Award. Eight-year-old Zachary Winkler was recognized for the phenomenal fundraising work he does for the Hospital for Sick Children.

For the last three years, Zachary has held his Do Something Sweet fundraising event on the first Sunday of November on the driveway of his family home, where he hands out candy floss and asks folks to donate what they can.

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He advertises his fundraiser by handing out flyers in his neighbourhood, at his school and synagogue, and runs ads in his local paper.

This year he convinced local merchants to cover the cost of T-shirts that he handed out to those who donated over \$20 as a thank you.

Did I mention that Zachary is only eight years old?

To date, Zachary has raised almost \$6,000 for Sick Kids hospital, bringing in over \$3,300 last year alone.

On top of being an enthusiastic student and big brother to his sister, Maya, Zachary also delivers the local paper and participates in many other fundraising activities.

I had the privilege of meeting Zachary and his family at the awards luncheon on Monday. On behalf of all resi-

dents of Thornhill, I want to congratulate him on receiving the Junior Citizen of the Year Award, and thank this extraordinary young man for his efforts. He is a hero to his family, his community and to all those who benefit every day from the great work done at the Hospital for Sick Children.

### NORTHERN ECONOMY

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** I'm pleased to comment today on the positive investments made by our government in last week's budget for northern Ontario and for my riding of Sault Ste. Marie.

We recognize the unique circumstances of northern communities, and we announced new initiatives to strengthen the northern economy and help create long-term prosperity.

Significant energy and infrastructure investments include:

- \$15 million to help upgrade the Huron Central rail line from Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury;

- a northern industrial electricity rate program worth \$150 million annually for qualifying large industrial facilities, to reduce their electricity prices by an average of 25%, which will assist Essar Steel in our community and St. Marys Paper;

- a new permanent northern Ontario energy credit of up to \$130 for individuals and up to \$200 for families. This credit is worth an estimated \$35 million and will help low- and middle-income northern Ontario residents with their energy costs;

- a \$10-million increase to the northern Ontario heritage fund. This moves the fund from \$80 million to \$90 million, which will help to create new jobs and support economic development; and

- a \$45-million investment over three years to support project-based skills-training programs for aboriginal peoples so that they can more fully participate in the emerging economies in northern Ontario.

We're making significant investments, nearly \$1.2 billion, in infrastructure, and we are creating more job opportunities to help stimulate growth.

Our budget has received very positive reviews from all individuals in our community. I want to urge all members in this Legislature to support our budget.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** In 1986, as minister of multiculturalism under the Peterson government, I stood in this place to declare Hispanic Heritage Day.

Today I am proud, along with the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, to declare, upon unanimous consent of this Legislature—in fact, all of you—April as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Why are we doing this? We're doing this because we want to recognize the great contributions that Hispanics of all 23 countries have made in terms of art, music,



commerce, industry, films, economics, science and medicine.

It is only fitting, as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month tomorrow, that there is an invitation that goes to all members to attend, and to ensure that everyone who arrives there who has Hispanic background in their bones and in their blood will recognize that they have made a contribution, and that they are recognized as making one not just today but in the future.

Why are we doing this? Because we have many countries—Bolivia, Belize, Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela—all these countries have Ontarians here, who are Canadians, who are proud Hispanics. Congratulations to all of us, because tomorrow will be the day when we congratulate them.

#### BUCHENWALD

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** April 9 marks the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Buchenwald, one of the infamous concentration camps operated by the Nazis during World War II.

At this camp, the Gestapo enforced an “extermination through labour” policy, literally working inmates to death. Through labour, illness and summary executions, up to 56,545 souls were lost at Buchenwald.

Among those commemorating this anniversary is Ed Carter-Edwards, a decorated Canadian veteran and one of 168 Allied airmen who, through tragic circumstances, were incarcerated in Buchenwald from August to November of 1944.

Ed and his fellow airmen experienced first-hand the horrors and inhumanity of Buchenwald. Their story supports those who suffered the Holocaust, and refutes all those who would deny it ever happened.

Sadly, there are fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors alive today. There is a great danger that, with their passing, the immediacy and urgency of their experiences will be lost. It is essential that successive generations carry that torch and ensure that the important lessons of the Holocaust endure.

Ed will be joined at the Buchenwald memorial by his wife, Lois; his son and daughter-in-law, Dennis and Karen, constituents of mine in Peterborough; his grandson, Craig, and his wife, Suzanna; and his two-year-old great-grandson, Sean.

The joining of four generations to commemorate the liberation of Buchenwald sends a strong signal that the legacy of those who experienced the Holocaust will never be forgotten. We must, each of us, join this effort, be ever-vigilant and ensure that we never allow this terrible chapter of history to repeat itself.

We have the Carter-Edwards family in the members’ east gallery today. We want to salute one of the outstanding Canadian heroes, a veteran of World War II who was at Buchenwald.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### SELECT COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I beg leave to present a report from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions.

*Report presented.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Very briefly, the all-party select committee was asked to report its observations and recommendations concerning a comprehensive provincial mental health and addictions strategy. Over the last year, operating in a very non-partisan fashion, we’ve had overwhelming response from individuals and organizations around Ontario. Their contributions will be found in the interim report that was tabled today and will be used to develop recommendations for the final report, which is due toward the end of this summer.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ENHANCING THE ABILITY OF INCOME SUPPORT RECIPIENTS TO BE FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 REHAUSSANT L'AUTONOMIE FINANCIÈRE DES BÉNÉFICIAIRES DU SOUTIEN DU REVENU

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 and the Taxation Act, 2007 /  
Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur le Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées et la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The other title is Enhancing the Ability of Income Support Recipients to be Financially Independent Act, 2010. The explanatory note: The bill amends the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, and the Taxation Act, 2007.

Under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, the bill raises the asset limits that apply in determining whether a person is eligible for income support, so the person can have \$12,000 individually or \$20,000 if there is a spouse included in the benefit unit. In addition, child support payments that a person receives are not included in income for the purpose of determining the



amount of income support for which that person is eligible.

At present, the amount of income support that a person is eligible to receive is reduced by 50% of the person's other monthly income. The bill lowers the reduction so that a person can retain a maximum of \$700 of other income monthly or a maximum of \$1,000 of other monthly income if there is a spouse included in the individual's benefit unit.

Under the Taxation Act, 2007, an employer that employs a person who receives income support during a taxation year is entitled to a non-refundable tax credit based on the maximum of \$10,000 that the employer pays to the person in salary arrangements for that year. The tax credit is available for a maximum of five employees.

I apologize for the length of that explanatory note.

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#### FRANCO-ONTARIAN DAY ACT, 2010

##### LOI DE 2010 SUR LE JOUR

##### DES FRANCO-ONTARIENS

##### ET DES FRANCO-ONTARIENNES

Mrs. Meilleur moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to proclaim Franco-Ontarian Day /  
Projet de loi 24, Loi proclamant le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I will make my statement during ministerial statements.

#### TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC MATTERS ACT, 2010

##### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE DES QUESTIONS D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Mr. Craitor moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act to require that meetings of provincial and municipal boards, commissions and other public bodies be open to the public / Projet de loi 25, Loi exigeant que les réunions des commissions et conseils provinciaux et municipaux et d'autres organismes publics soient ouvertes au public.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** The bill requires designated public bodies to give reasonable notice to the public of their meetings and proposed additions to meeting agendas and to ensure that the meetings are open to the public. A

designated public body will be required to keep minutes of its meetings and to publish them.

The bill establishes a procedure whereby a person who believes a designated public body has contravened or is about to contravene the bill may make a complaint to the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The commissioner will be empowered to review the complaint and to undertake a review on his or her own initiative.

The bill sets out the powers the commissioner may exercise in reviewing a suspected contravention, including the powers to enter and inspect premises and to demand production of documents and things relevant to the review, and to require any person to appear before the commissioner to give evidence. The bill authorizes the commissioner to make certain orders after review, including an order that voids a decision made by a designated public body at a meeting that did not conform to the requirements of the bill.

Under this bill, it will be an offence to fail to comply with an order of the commissioner.

#### MOTIONS

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion respecting the consideration of the budget motion and the budget bill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 71(d), the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs may consider Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act, while the House is debating the budget motion on Thursday, April 1, 2010, and Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts, on Thursday, April 15, 2010.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### JOUR DES FRANCO-ONTARIENS ET DES FRANCO-ONTARIENNES FRANCO-ONTARIAN DAY

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je suis très heureuse de prendre la parole aujourd'hui pour souligner le lancement du projet de loi qui reconnaîtrait officiellement le 25 septembre comme Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. Cette autre belle initiative du



gouvernement McGuinty envers la communauté francophone vise non seulement à souligner l'apport historique et déterminant de l'un des peuples fondateurs du Canada, mais aussi à souligner l'extraordinaire essor de l'Ontario depuis la Confédération.

Si adoptée, la Loi de 2010 sur le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes rappellerait aux Ontariens et aux Ontariennes de toute souche que la présence française en Ontario existe depuis 400 ans cette année.

The 2010 Franco-Ontarian Day Act, if passed, would remind Ontarians of all backgrounds that the French presence in Ontario dates back 400 years.

This act will also celebrate the 35th anniversary of the creation of the Franco-Ontarian flag, which was raised for the first time, in Sudbury, in 1975. And it will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of French Ontario's driving force, known today as the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario. This assembly was formed in 1910, the dawn of a new era in French-language education in Ontario.

En présentant ce projet de loi, le gouvernement désire d'ailleurs répondre par l'affirmative à une requête de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario qui, en décembre dernier, avait adopté une résolution demandant une telle loi.

Rappelons-nous tout le chemin parcouru au cours de ces quatre centaines de présence française en Ontario, depuis l'arrivée de Samuel de Champlain et celle d'Étienne Brûlé, qui fut le premier Européen à atteindre et à découvrir l'embouchure de la rivière Humber, marquant ainsi les débuts de ce qui allait devenir Toronto.

Since then, there have been many achievements that supported the francophone community. This includes the battle for French-language education in Ontario at the turn of the last century. There is also the phenomenal progress that the francophone community has made over the past 40 years, during which time its economic prosperity grew significantly for the benefit of all Ontarians of all origins and all languages.

The bill I am proposing today would not have a big financial impact on the government, but symbolically its impact will be tremendous. It would recognize that throughout our province's history, the francophone community has always been there to help build Ontario in co-operation with its anglophone counterpart.

Nous n'avons qu'à penser aux contributions des francophones à l'établissement des systèmes scolaires et de transport ferroviaire, au développement de nos ressources forestières et minières, et à leurs contributions à notre système de cours de justice et à notre réseau de santé, qui font l'envie du monde entier.

Je pense aussi à l'apprentissage préscolaire, qui est une priorité de notre gouvernement. Ce système a été mis en place pour la première fois par les conseils scolaires francophones et sert désormais de modèle au reste de la province.

La communauté francophone, grâce au leadership de ses organisations, comme l'AFO, a aussi contribué à construire le Canada en étroite collaboration avec les autres provinces canadiennes et les Premières Nations.

La communauté franco-ontarienne d'aujourd'hui accueille à bras ouverts de nombreux immigrants francophones et francophiles du monde entier qui viennent s'établir ici dans notre belle province. Ces francophones arrivants apportent une richesse culturelle, des compétences professionnelles, et surtout une ouverture sur le monde qui positionne l'Ontario comme société d'avenir, ce qui a un impact des plus positifs pour notre économie.

Monsieur le Président, comme vous l'aurez constaté, je suis animée d'une grande fierté en vous faisant part des réalisations des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes d'hier et d'aujourd'hui.

I therefore invite everyone here to support the passing of this bill which will enable francophones and all Ontarians to celebrate Ontario's 400-year-old francophone community every year on September 25.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Statements by ministries? Responses?

**M. Peter Shurman:** Nous, dans cette Assemblée, recevons de bonnes nouvelles aujourd'hui avec la courtoisie de la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Il me semble que nous considérons fréquemment des projets de loi des membres privés, donc nous devons donner une reconnaissance pour la proposition d'un jour spécial; peut-être une fête nationale, ou un jour désigné pour un groupe identifiable.

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Malheureusement, à date, nous n'avons aucun jour spécifique pour rendre hommage à un groupe extraordinaire dans son rôle comme une des deux nations fondatrices de notre province, notre Ontario. Le choix du 25 septembre comme date est excellent parce que c'était l'anniversaire d'adoption unanime du drapeau franco-ontarien, et j'ai ce drapeau dans mon propre bureau.

Premièrement, je voudrais féliciter la ministre pour sa diligence et pour le travail nécessaire pour créer en Ontario un jour des francophones. Comme pays, le Canada est officiellement bilingue mais trop souvent, nos racines francophones prennent une position secondaire. Notamment, ici, dans notre province de l'Ontario, il est oublié de temps en temps actuellement que nous avons deux nations fondatrices, soit les Franco-Ontariens et les anglos, qui sont des partenaires égaux. Le Canada était, de plus, un des fondateurs de la Francophonie il y a 40 ans, mais les francophones sont des Canadiens et des Ontariens depuis des siècles.

Il me semble que nous sommes ici, véritablement, un miroir du monde. Dans notre histoire et aujourd'hui, nous pouvons dire que notre communauté franco-ontarienne fait partie d'une communauté mondiale vaste, complexe, inclusive et ouverte. De temps en temps, on doit se souvenir que les résultats et les bénéfices pour nous, maintenant, en 2010, ne sont pas seulement justifiés, mais extrêmement appréciés, parce que deux peuples ont fixé un objectif, ont commencé une tâche, ont maintenu



un défi avec patience et ont montré une habileté commune à maintenir le cours face aux obstacles durant des siècles.

C'est maintenant une opportunité de donner une reconnaissance réelle, de rendre hommage aux Franco-Ontariens—à peu près seulement 4 % de notre population, mais vraiment un partenaire égal dans et depuis notre fondation. Il est important de se souvenir que les objectifs doivent être clairs : de promouvoir la langue française et la contribution de nos concitoyens, les Franco-Ontariens, dans les disciplines variées économiques, médicales, sociales ou n'importe laquelle. C'est notre devoir. C'est notre responsabilité.

À l'image de la population de l'Ontario, la population franco-ontarienne est diverse et vibrante. Elle accueille, depuis de nombreuses années, des francophones de l'Afrique, de l'Asie, du Moyen-Orient et de l'Europe. Les minorités raciales francophones représentent aujourd'hui plus de 10 % de la population francophone de la province. Alors, nos racines franco-ontariennes sont maintenant vraiment mondiales. Nous avons, en Ontario, la fierté et la confiance d'être une force majeure dans la francophonie du monde.

De la part de l'opposition officielle, je souhaite à la communauté franco-ontarienne mes félicitations et je félicite la ministre pour avoir introduit cet important projet de loi.

I would like to switch into English now to propose a motion to this Legislature.

I move that this bill be adopted with second and third reading today without debate by unanimous consent.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** With the member's indulgence, I'm going to give the opportunity first to the member from Nickel Belt to respond, and then I can come back to your point.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You must be clairvoyant, Speaker, that you knew that I was going to say something about this.

Pour moi aussi il me fait extrêmement plaisir de participer à la discussion aujourd'hui. J'aimerais rappeler que cette année, l'ACFO—l'AFO maintenant—célèbre son 100<sup>e</sup> anniversaire. C'était une des demandes qu'ils avaient faites, mais ils en ont fait bien d'autres, bien entendu.

J'ai eu le plaisir de participer au souper commémoratif du 100<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, et c'était pas mal intéressant parce qu'il nous ramenait il y a cent ans, en 1910.

Cela avait l'air de quoi, la réunion de fondation? La réunion de fondation, premièrement, c'était tous des hommes, parce que dans ce temps-là c'était les hommes qui avaient le pouvoir. C'était surtout des gens d'Ottawa, et je vous dirais que les choses n'ont pas changé encore. Ottawa continue à être le centre de l'univers pour certains. Et on avait beaucoup de représentants du clergé. En 2010 la francophonie est beaucoup plus variée que ça, beaucoup plus diversifiée.

Par contre, il est important de se rappeler qu'en 1910 le gouvernement de l'Ontario était pour proposer le Règlement 17. Le Règlement 17 servait à l'assimilation

des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes. Le Règlement 17, c'est un règlement qui empêchait l'enseignement du français en Ontario. On ne voulait plus de francophones en Ontario, on voulait s'en débarrasser. On savait que la meilleure façon de se débarrasser des francophones, c'était de les empêcher l'éducation; ça passe par l'éducation. Le gouvernement de l'Ontario a passé le Règlement 17 mais la francophonie a survécu. La francophonie a vécu des moments difficiles.

Par contre, on est rendu en 2010 et le gouvernement de M. McGuinty présente la maternelle et le jardin à temps plein comme quelque chose de révolutionnaire. Pour les écoles francophones ça fait longtemps qu'on a ça. Ce projet de loi-là n'a pas été écrit pour les francophones, mais va vraiment à l'encontre de la francophonie. C'est un projet de loi qui va servir à assimiler nos petits Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes. Je ne sais pas pourquoi on ferait quelque chose comme ça en 2010, mais ils sont en train de le faire quand même.

Je regarde également cette année. On va avoir notre journée franco-ontarienne. On célèbre également le 35<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du drapeau franco-ontarien. Je suis toujours fier de dire que ce drapeau-là a été fait à Sudbury, sur le campus de l'Université Laurentienne. M. Gervais, celui qui l'a fait, a encore le drapeau original, cousu à la main—disons qu'il n'était pas couturier, mais c'est quand même très beau—qu'il garde bien précieusement et qu'il sort lors des moments commémoratifs. Cette année, certainement, avec le 35<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du drapeau, on va ressortir le drapeau original, qui est toujours chez lui, à Sudbury.

M<sup>me</sup> la ministre nous parlait que c'est maintenant le 400<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'arrivée de la francophonie en Ontario. Je dois vous dire que j'ai eu la chance de participer au 400<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la ville de Québec, et ils ont mis la barre haute. J'ai hâte de voir les célébrations qui vont se passer en Ontario pour célébrer 400 ans d'histoire francophone. Parce qu'ils ont mis la barre haute, ça va être pas mal difficile d'être à leur égal.

À date, je n'ai pas entendu parler qu'on était pour célébrer quoi que ce soit, mais j'ai encore hâte, puis j'ai encore espoir, puis j'espère qu'on va faire ça aussi bien que la ville de Québec a réussi à le faire.

Il y avait de petites choses dans le discours de la ministre qui m'agacent un petit peu; de dire qu'on est ouvert à l'immigration et qu'on accueille les francophones—les immigrants qui font du français leur langue d'immersion sont très rares. Si tu regardes les possibilités d'emploi pour nos nouveaux arrivants qui décident d'utiliser le français comme langue d'insertion, les possibilités d'emploi ne sont pas trop fortes, et les possibilités d'intégration sont difficiles également.

La Loi sur les services en français, qui était promulguée en 1986, célèbre maintenant son 24<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, mais pourtant, on regarde à la une des journaux et on voit que les gens de Peel n'ont toujours pas accès à des services de santé en français. Ça fait 24 ans qu'ils se préparent à offrir des services en français dans cette communauté-là. Combien de temps est-ce que ça va prendre avant que ça



leur rentre dans la tête que c'est une loi en Ontario? Quand tu vis dans une région désignée, tu as le droit d'accès à des services en français. On est encore loin de là. Nos lois ont été passées, des régions sont désignées, mais les services en français tardent à arriver.

Donc, moi, je suis très contente que le 25 septembre je vais célébrer avec toute fanfare la nouvelle journée des Franco-Ontariens, et j'ai également très hâte d'avoir la journée de congé. Ça va me faire encore plus plaisir.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Shurman has asked for unanimous consent for the orders for second and third reading of An act to proclaim Franco-Ontarian Day and for the question to be put on the motions for second and third reading forthwith without debate or amendment? Agreed? I heard a no.

The government House leader on a point of order.

1540

**L'hon. Monique M. Smith:** C'est encore un peu dommage qu'on doit dire "non" aujourd'hui à cette demande mais, vraiment, on a beaucoup de gen dans la communauté qui voulaient venir fêter avec nous cette célébration de la journée du drapeau. Alors, on a décidé que ce n'était pas sur le programme de le passer en troisième lecture aujourd'hui. Alors, on va le remettre pour une autre journée où on peut avoir tous les gens de la communauté ici à célébrer avec nous.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Is it my understanding that the House leader from the Liberal Party is the person who said no to that? I would like to clarify the record. It's very important. On this side, we are supportive of this third reading unanimously, unless there's another agenda.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On a point of order, Speaker: I suspect you may find that there isn't a point of order, but this illustrates how uncomfortable it can be for either side of the chamber when that technique—and I'll leave it at that for the moment—is used. It's used at the end of sessions, for instance, when private members' bills are being pursued aggressively by sponsors of those bills. I'd love for there to be an enforced accord amongst parties that would make sure that these sorts of things didn't happen, because dollars to doughnuts, before the year 2010 is over, we're going to have people from the other side doing that to the opposition members, attempting to squeeze them and embarrass them into voting for a particular bill. It's not good procedure and it's not good process, but I've got to tell you, you know as well as I do that it happens from both sides of the House. Today is just a wonderful illustration of how uncomfortable it can make people.

**L'hon. Monique M. Smith:** J'ai hâte de célébrer avec mes co-célébrants de ces communautés francophones. Comme une francophone de la province de l'Ontario, je suis très contente de voir que tout le monde est du même avis sur ce projet de loi, mais je pense que c'est avec un peu de respect pour notre communauté qu'on les invite ici pour célébrer avec nous. C'est pour ça qu'on demande que ce vote soit remis.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I would simply like to go on record by way of saying that I proposed what I did totally

above board and without any political motivation. I am the francophone affairs critic for our party. I believe in what I said in the response to the minister's statement.

In response to the bill, I do believe that the bill is proposed in earnest. I have the utmost respect for the French community and would love to see it passed by unanimous consent today. If those are not the government's wishes, that's fine; I accept that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

To the original point of order raised by the member from Durham: All that is required for the Speaker is to hear a no, and there was a no in the chamber.

## PETITIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to read a petition to the Parliament of Ontario, as follows:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy" and use "every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity;" Internet service; "haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming;" personal care; "home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in" the largest tax increase, "the health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned," from the riding of Durham, "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes ... on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign and support it.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm pleased to present this petition from the people of Nipissing, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients ...; and

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are being "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury



Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the clerks' table with George.

#### ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm pleased to be at this end of the House.

My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Niagara Centre for the Arts and the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts are dependent on each other to build the density of activity required to make the arts centre financially feasible, failure to fund the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts would jeopardize the viability of the entire centre;

"Whereas the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts and the Niagara Centre for the Arts play the most significant role in the comprehensive plan to launch downtown St. Catharines as a significant arts hub for Niagara;

"Whereas independent consultants have confirmed that St. Catharines is very poorly served in comparison to similar cities in Canada with respect to existing arts spaces, the people of St. Catharines are poorly served as audience members and as students of the arts;

"Whereas the project will provide stable resources to support the work of St. Catharines arts groups and will work toward the development of new ones;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding toward the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts."

I'm pleased to sign my signature in support of this.

#### TAXATION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government's plan to harmonize the PST and the GST will result in Ontario taxpayers paying 8% more for a multitude of products and services;

"Whereas the 8% tax increase will increase the cost of services such as housing and real estate services, gasoline, hydro bills, home heating fuel, Internet and cable bills, haircuts, gym memberships, legal services, construction and renovations, car repairs, plumbing and electrical services, landscaping services, leisure activities, hotel rooms, veterinary services for the family pet and even funeral services; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers cannot afford this tax grab—particularly in the middle of a recession;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to abandon the sales tax increase announced in the 2009 budget."

I've affixed my signature as I'm in agreement.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I have a petition signed by more than 300 people from the town of Millbrook in my riding. It says:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas it is being respectfully requested that a moratorium on all water taking in excess of 50,000 litres per day be in effect until the legislated municipal watershed plans for every watershed whose streams originate within the Oak Ridges moraine have been completed and approved;

"Furthermore, that an amendment to the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan be made that would prohibit the servicing of any major development from ground or surface water sources within the Oak Ridges moraine plan area unless a watershed plan has been completed."

I table this petition with page George.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition with regard to health care in the Parry Sound area, and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas availability to see a doctor in the Parry Sound district is unacceptable;

"Whereas many residents attempt to call, get on waiting lists and are still not able to see a doctor, ultimately told to go to the emergency department if severe. This situation has deteriorated the last year.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health require this situation be seriously looked into so that the health care for residents seeing a doctor substantially improves."

I support this petition.

1550

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Timmins-James Bay.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You took me by surprise the last time; I put it away.

I have a petition here signed by a number of citizens from the Earlton area, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, as citizens of Canada and residents of the province of Ontario, draw to the attention of the government of Ontario that the potential takeover of Grant Forest Products by US multinational Georgia-



Pacific could have profound impacts on the forest-dependent communities of northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the government has already failed to represent the interests of the north by allowing foreign multinationals Vale and Xstrata to take over key mining interests; and

"Whereas there is a viable Canadian consortium willing to bid on these forestry assets;

"Therefore, your petitioners request the government undertake a full and diligent review of any potential selloff of Grant Forest Products operations to determine whether or not the proposed sale of it is in the best interests of the citizens of northern Ontario."

I sign the petition.

#### ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the health of the First Nations youth in Ontario is of growing concern;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue the partnership with the Right to Play partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation;

"To expand the Right to Play program to other First Nations communities; and

"To follow up these programs to ensure that other initiatives continue to promote the health of First Nations youth in Ontario."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to that, as well.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have a petition directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Cambridge Memorial Hospital and other hospitals in the Waterloo region are experiencing substantial increased demands due to population growth; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government's freeze on new long-term-care facilities has resulted in additional long-term-care patients in our hospitals; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government's cuts to hospital funding have resulted in a dangerous environment for patients and staff in Cambridge and across Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) That the McGuinty government meet its obligations to introduce a population-needs-based funding formula for hospitals, as has been done in other Canadian provinces."

Pursuant to the standing orders, I affix my name thereto.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Bob Chiarelli:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulation practices of the former Conservative government; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government's plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water."

I support the petition and have endorsed it.

#### TAXATION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government's plan to harmonize the PST and the GST will result in Ontario taxpayers paying 8% more for a multitude of products and services;

"Whereas the 8% tax increase will increase the cost of services such as housing and real estate services, gasoline, hydro bills, home heating fuel, Internet and cable bills, haircuts, gym memberships, legal services, construction and renovations, car repairs, plumbing and electrical services, landscaping services, leisure activities, hotel rooms, veterinary services for the family pet and even funeral services; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers cannot afford this tax grab—particularly in the middle of a recession;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to abandon the sales tax increase announced in the 2009 budget."

I've affixed my signature as I am in agreement, and I give it to page Giselle.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I would especially like to thank Nasir Chatha, Mohammad Qureshi and Deborah Sturgeon for having gathered the signatures. It reads as follows:



"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the ongoing capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could better be performed in an off-site facility. An ambulatory surgery centre would greatly increase the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, reduce wait times for patients and free up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds ... to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and ask page Anne-Marie to carry it for me.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history" but he still cuts health care services and nurses; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again" on Canada Day 2010 "with his new 13% combined" GST "at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13%" combined GST "will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as"—there are 20 items listed, and that's only part of it;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

Pursuant to the standing orders, I affix my name thereto.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Dave Levac:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a unique opportunity to develop the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario and the Legislative Assembly [should] ensure that this valuable resource is used to advantage all Ontarians"—this petition is signed by members of Toronto in concert with those in the

north—"while respecting the environment and rights of the First Nations people;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To develop the natural resources in the Ring of Fire for economic benefit for Ontario;

"To ensure that the development of the Ring of Fire does so only within the guidelines of an EPA report;

"To respect the rights of the First Nations people and communities; and

"To work with local industry to bring employment to northern Ontario communities."

I sign the petition with respect and offer it to Mathilda.

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario's youth;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

"To continue to make our children a priority for this government;

"To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

"To continue to support Ontario's families through these initiatives; and

"To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and look forward to their continued growth across the province."

I agree with the petition, and I sign my name and send it with page Harsh.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### 2010 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 29, 2010, on the amendment to the motion by Mr. Duncan, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure to take this opportunity this afternoon to provide the response to the budget from New Democrats. I want to start that process by invoking counsel of a fellow member who sits not far from here in the Legislature, in the chamber, and that's the Premier.

1600

Many times the Premier has delivered his well-worn refrain that Ontario must adopt new ways of thinking to



keep up with the times and move on with the future. That's his favourite refrain these days, I have to say. The old ideas, the Premier always says—and reminds us on so many occasions—are a thing of the past, and we have to build a prosperous Ontario and build our prosperity with new thinking, not the old ideas of the past. This is what the Premier is constantly telling us.

It's really quite perplexing for New Democrats that the Premier continues to use that kind of language, because when we see what's in the actual budget, we see that the economic prescription the Premier has actually put forward is really, truly rooted in those very old ideas that haven't worked, those tired ideas that have actually paved the way for the very recession we're trying to crawl out of right now, and that has created so much hardship for so many families that are still struggling today in Ontario.

In fairness, I think there is no politician who would disagree that the task we have ahead of us is a very difficult one. The challenge of getting this great province back on track and ensuring a brighter future for those people who are having trouble today is an important one. People have struggled a great deal during these very difficult times. Yet none of us in the House, I don't think, should underestimate exactly how difficult it's going to be to get us back on track. The magnitude of the job before us is significant, and the real concern that people continue to have today is quite great, and rightfully so.

Anyone in this House who has knocked on a door or attended a community event when they've been home in their ridings over the past little while—I'm sure many MPPs will be in their ridings for quite a number of days coming up very shortly over the Easter holiday and into the following constituency week. Anyone who takes that time to talk to constituents is going to know that the impact this recession has had on regular, everyday families has been serious and severe. People are truly suffering; they're truly having a difficult time. You don't need to open the budget pages and look at all the fancy graphs and all the charts. That's not what it's about. It's about real folks who have had real difficulty over the last months—in fact, over a year; almost two years now—in terms of the economic downturn we've been suffering.

But when we look around at our friends, at our community members, at our neighbours who have struggled and who are working really hard to try to get out of this economic downturn, we know that they are still going to bed every day worried about the future. We know that this budget has not been something that has provided them with a heck of a lot of hope or a heck of a lot of help in terms of making ends meet. We know that this budget that the Premier brought down a week or so ago is going to do nothing to alleviate the fear they still have for the future, for themselves, for their children and for their families.

It's during these very, very challenging times, when hard-working people feel they're fast running out of places to turn for help, that families look to people like us, their elected officials, for solutions that help support

them and help them get through very difficult and tough times. They look to us, in fact, more than ever before in times like this.

There's no doubt that it's a challenge for us to come up with the solutions we need to make people feel that that hope is there again. New Democrats would acknowledge that that's definitely the case. Yet it's a challenge we must rise to. It's a challenge we can't ignore. It's a challenge that is our obligation to step up to the plate and meet. Ontario families expect a hand up when they're down, and we on this side of the House—at least New Democrats—believe they deserve to get that hand up when times are tough and when things are down.

In the conversation I've had with families across the province, certainly in my community but in other places as well as I travel from one part of Ontario to another, it's pretty clear that there are two pretty basic things that the people of this province were looking for in the budget. They were looking for a clear road map that would show a way out of the recession; some kind of mechanism for putting stronger tools in place to better shelter Ontario from the winds of economic uncertainty the next time they blow; a blueprint to get back to the work of assuring stable funding for our hospitals and our schools; a real strategy for building secure, good-paying jobs based on the innovations and expertise that have long made this province work.

But second, and more importantly, given the challenges that many families are facing, Ontarians were counting on this budget to deliver the kind of help that they need right now. Yes, Ontarians are willing to engage in a discussion about whether we should be pursuing the export of clean water technology or how we can best update our Commodity Futures Act. Certainly, those are conversations that people are prepared to engage in. But they were also hoping that their government might just extend the consideration of also making time for their day-to-day struggles to be addressed.

To put it another way, Ontarians just wanted this budget to give them a little bit of help, something to make it a little bit easier just to pay the bills; a little support to help keep the family budget out of the red; a small boost that would have families know that their government was actually looking out for them. In my view, that is not a heck of a lot for people to ask of their government, particularly because of the tough times that we're in.

Yet this budget offers not a single bit of help. It offers no help at all in the immediate for families in Ontario who are hoping for even a small gesture that would have made life just a little bit more affordable for them. In fact, at a time when families are bracing for the introduction of the harmonized sales tax, this budget is, in many ways, only contributing to their worry; it's making things worse for the people of this province.

Last week's budget only serves to more deeply reaffirm our belief, on this side of the chamber, that this Liberal government risks paralyzing a real recovery with this budget, and worse, making Ontarians even more vulnerable to financial instability as we move forward.



On the issue of jobs alone—the biggest single issue on people’s minds today, the largest concern that people have—on that issue alone, we know that the building of secure, durable, long-term jobs requires that we make sure that we’re building on the unique expertise that we have here in this province instead of looking at a quick fix with a jobs plan that focuses, really, solely on creating the types of positions that could again be uprooted and moved out of the province as soon as the winds shift again. But, unfortunately, when it comes to creating and protecting good jobs, budget 2010 reveals that this government is setting our province up to once again repeat the failures and the mistakes of the past.

Ontarians know that the same failed, discarded policies that left us with huge holes in our economic sector aren’t now going to somehow miraculously give us the job growth that we need to get the province back on track. Those same old policies are simply not going to work. But what we see in the budget are those same ideas that haven’t been working for the hundreds of thousands of people who have been losing jobs in this province.

New Democrats have been pretty clear about the plan that we think we need to get Ontario back on track, and it’s a pretty straightforward plan. We need to get back to some basics to do, once again, what Ontario has always done well, which is capitalizing on our strengths to build a stronger, more stable tomorrow. Ontario’s natural resources, for example, our public assets and our tax dollars, should be used to create and protect jobs and to build for Ontario’s future. Ontario needs comprehensive programs that would ensure that provincial and municipal procurement projects give preference to Ontario- and Canadian-made projects. This is a very simple policy that could be in place, that could be putting tens of thousands of Ontario workers back to work, and yet this government refuses, time and again, to implement that kind of a policy.

1610

We need a policy that insists that Ontario resources are processed here in Ontario. An effective buy-Ontario, local-tax-dollars-for-local-jobs program would allow smaller and mid-sized Ontario companies to achieve the scale that they need for export and to successfully compete in global markets. This is something that would help us get back on track. It would create good-paying jobs for Ontario workers.

This government’s economic strategy is too rooted in giving up control of Ontario’s economy. Ontario must create more value-added jobs in the forestry and mining sectors. That’s something that we should be trying to do. The budget speaks not at all of these kinds of initiatives. A value-added strategy in forestry would mean more jobs making hardwood flooring and doors, engineered wood products, cabinets, furniture; and less unprocessed lumber, less raw logs simply being shipped out of this province to be processed somewhere else. In fact, we must process Ontario resources here in Ontario, not in outside jurisdictions, as much as possible, and that’s only going to happen with strong policies put in place by this

provincial government. We need the steps to be taken to keep investment closer to home and we also need action to protect the jobs that we already have.

I rise today talking about this when yet another announcement from my own community—that’s almost 700 jobs in three weeks or so—142 jobs, Lakeport Brewery, yesterday’s announcement. A couple of weeks ago, Siemens, a plant that had manufactured gas plant turbines and other kinds of turbines in Hamilton for over 100 years—we actually had the press conference about the closure of that plant in front of a cornerstone that was put in place about five years ago signifying the 100th year of that plant existing on that site, employing workers and creating good jobs with good benefits, good pensions for umpteen families, for hundreds of families, probably thousands of families over the years of operation. But unfortunately, that plant is closing.

We have to protect the jobs that we have. We can’t simply allow these companies to pull up stakes and walk out of our province, turning their back on workers, turning their back on communities—and this government has been silent. It’s been total absent of any ideas, of any policies, of any programs to keep our good jobs here in Ontario.

In fact, we know that electricity costs in this province have been driving jobs out of Ontario, driving jobs out of northern Ontario. Quebec and Manitoba have an industrial hydro rate that is 40% less than Ontario’s industrial rate. So the government, in their budget, announced a roughly 25% reduction in hydro rates for large northern industrial users; however, we know that this is something that New Democrats have been calling for, for at least five years. While this government sat on its hands and did nothing for five years, 45,000 forestry jobs were lost in northern Ontario.

My friends across the way might want to jeer and heckle at me but they should go up to Thunder Bay and they should talk to some of those workers who describe the suicides that happened in their community to the brothers and sisters that they used to work at the plants side by side with. They’ve killed themselves because there’s no hope left up there. Now, five years later, this government has the gall to try to buy off some votes and save the seats of a few members up there by throwing this pittance at northern Ontario, and it is shameful to the nth degree that they would be prepared to do that. It is callous, and I can tell the members across the way who think it’s funny that in fact the people there are suffering significantly. And they see this for exactly what it is: It is too little and it is far too late for those 45,000 workers and their families.

You know, the government put in place and they brag about a forestry sustainability fund. They say “Oh, we’ve done all kinds of great things for northern Ontario.” Well, guess what? Five years after the fund was put in place, 50% of it is still sitting in a bank account, unutilized, because this government is out of touch with the needs of the forestry industry and the needs of the people of northern Ontario.



Just as First Nations should have been consulted about the impact of the harmonized sales tax and the effect it would have on their communities, particularly in relation to their treaty rights, First Nations should have also been at the table with the government talking about the Ring of Fire. This government talks a good talk when it comes to their renewed relationship to First Nations. Every First Nations leader I've spoken to—and I've spoken to many, particularly in the last year or so—thinks it's a mockery. They know darn well the government did not talk to them about the harmonized sales tax and has begun this highfalutin plan about the Ring of Fire without even having the respect to have a dignified conversation, nation to nation, with First Nations representatives.

They can talk all they want about a renewed relationship, but everyone knows, particularly First Nations leadership, that the government is playing a game. They're playing a shell game with the harmonized sales tax, blaming the federal government, knowing it was their responsibility all along to have a conversation with First Nations leaders about treaty rights and the impact of the harmonized sales tax, and they're playing a game now, pretending that they have this relationship that they don't have at all. It's a shameful state in this province. It's a matter of basic respect and dignity for First Nations communities in Ontario.

One of the things that it will also do, if the government begins to finally do the right thing, is create opportunity for First Nations, create job opportunities for First Nations. But that's not going to happen if this government doesn't get serious about having that respectful conversation. Any discussions around the Ring of Fire have to be focused on ensuring that we can deliver sustainable jobs and resource wealth to First Nations who live there.

The government likes to pretend that the few things they put in the budget are going to be enough. It's not going to be anywhere near enough. I certainly hope that the Premier is listening in the same way that I am listening, in the same way the member for Timmins—James Bay is listening, in the same way the member for Kenora—Rainy River is listening and in the same way the member for Nickel Belt is listening to the concerns of First Nations communities, because I have to tell you that we're hearing some very concerning comments from First Nations leaders. This government has been given enough opportunity to realize that they have an obligation and that if they fulfill that obligation, there are possibilities for good things to happen. But if they once again turn their backs on First Nations communities, it will be not only their shame, but the shame of our entire province.

It's interesting: The government, in its budget, also put this piece in place that tried to show a little bit of concern—I suppose that's what they were trying to do—making it look as if they were trying to provide a little bit of support for northern Ontario families. Unfortunately, the reality is that northern Ontario families are going to get hit so hard by the harmonized sales tax that this

small, little energy credit that the government put in its budget isn't going to come anywhere near to making up just for the harmonized sales tax cost on home heating and electricity. You just have to do the math and it's really, really clear.

Obviously, the government didn't do the math. Instead, they've put this pittance in the budget that is really a slap in the face to northern Ontario families, who are not only going to have to pay more in home heating and more in electricity—and let's remember that this is year after year after year; this is for people whose hydro costs are much greater than in southern Ontario, simply because of seasonal issues and the length of their winter; families whose heating costs are significantly higher than the people in southern Ontario's, simply because it gets a heck of a lot colder there for a heck of a lot longer. This government puts a few pennies on the table, not even acknowledging that it won't even cover off those two pieces. But guess what else? The people of northern Ontario don't have a TTC. They don't have a transit system; they drive everywhere. And the cost of gas, come July 1, is going to go up 8%. So never mind that this small credit that the government has put in the budget isn't even going to cover the HST on home heating and electricity; what about gas in your car, which, again, is something that northerners use a lot more than people in southern Ontario who have actual other transportation options. It is a slap in the face. We're not even talking about the cost of getting your hair cut, taking your pet to the vet, your funeral costs, fees for—

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**Mr. Paul Miller:** Sports.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —sports—thank you, Paul Miller, member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek—fees for kids to join. I was in northern Ontario not too long ago with a hockey association that is extremely concerned about the impact of the HST on the fees that they're going to have to charge their players, that they're going to have to charge their teams for registering. It's going to hit very, very hard. And this government thinks that the pittance that they put in the budget is enough to placate the people of northern Ontario. I can tell you very much that it's not going to be the case.

It's really, really obvious that this government continues to focus on catchy quick fixes but that no long-term strategies exist. No long-term strategies exist to make life more affordable for families and for people in northern Ontario or across this province; and no strategies exist, no plans, no real, firm plans to create decent jobs and get people back to work.

It's really imperative that the government have a clear plan, because we know that the harmonized sales tax, corporate tax cuts and tax giveaways to profitable banks are not going to create jobs. That's their plan, but it's not going to create a single job. A big fat tax break to RBC when they've just posted record profits ain't going to employ a single person. So I don't know why the government insists on these old kinds of policies—these across-the-board, no-strings-attached corporate tax give-



aways. That doesn't help anybody. Well, it helps the CEOs of the banks, perhaps, increases their annual bonus a little bit, perhaps, but it doesn't put a single piece of bread on the table for hard-working Ontarians who are out of luck with this government's budget.

High-wage, good, quality jobs can actually be created by carefully targeting financial incentives towards quality investments in plants and in machinery, computer technology, new employment and skills training. We need to target those investments, we need to tie the money to job creation, not just this largesse—these huge tax cuts for people who are already making money hand over fist in this province. The inputs for the government's harmonized sales tax are going to cost the treasury \$4.5 billion annually, and its corporate income tax rate reduction is going to cost the treasury a further \$2.4 billion annually.

We in the NDP simply don't believe that these tax cuts are the best use of \$7 billion of our tax money a year. We don't think that our tax revenue stream should be reduced by \$7 billion with nothing to show for it, with no benefit whatsoever to the vast majority of people in this province. A more targeted use of that kind of money, a more targeted use of \$7 billion—in fact, probably a more targeted use of even far less than \$7 billion—could create many, many more jobs, if it was invested wisely. In particular, creative and timely use of tax credits for new investments and new hiring in Ontario—something that's done in Quebec, something that's done in Manitoba and other provinces—is one other idea that is far more effective than the no-strings-attached corporate tax giveaways that this government favours.

Just as Ontarians are looking for pragmatic plans and ideas for job creation, they are also looking for some real action in other areas. One of those areas is an area that New Democrats have been talking about for quite some time, and that is the area of pensions. People were hoping that we could get some real action on the building of a pension strategy for the people of this province. We need a pension strategy that's going to give working people security and dignity once they retire. The government, in fact, has introduced Bill 236. It's more or less a house-keeping bill. It tinkers with some of the minor issues around Ontario's pension system. The budget did hint that a more substantive bill was perhaps coming forward. I'm hoping against hope that that more substantive bill is actually going to have some kind of effect on the vast majority of working people in this province who don't have a pension plan.

One of the things that we didn't see—that we didn't hear any hint of—was the commitment to increasing the pension benefit guarantee fund to \$2,500, something that not only have New Democrats been calling for, for quite some time, but even the government's own expert, Harry Arthurs, in his report that they commissioned—a report they commissioned, by the way, to get them over the last election, because they didn't want to talk about pensions before the last election, so they got this report commissioned. The report finally came forward about a year and a half ago, and still the government is dragging its

feet. But what we are not hearing is that their pension expert, who agrees with New Democrats—we're not hearing that they're going to make that commitment to the pension benefit guarantee fund.

What is that fund? That fund is there so that when workers have a plant closure and the pension plan is wound up and is underfunded, what needs to happen is that people can access the pension benefit guarantee fund to top up their pensions, or basically top up their income, up to \$2,500. That's what we would like to see. Right now it's \$1,000, and that's simply not reflective of the kinds of pensions that people should be getting but are losing as a result of these windups that are underfunded. If Harry Arthurs, their own expert, suggests it—New Democrats have been calling for it for quite some time—I don't understand why this government is not prepared to actually put in place an increase in the pension benefit guarantee fund, a top-up to the maximum of \$2,500.

Do you know what else wasn't there? There was nothing in the budget to hint that they might actually put together an Ontario pension agency to help out stranded pensions. This is another recommendation we've brought forward that Harry Arthurs was very, very much encouraging in his report, but we're not hearing any sound from the government that they're prepared to put that kind of agency together, a kind agency that actually would have helped Nortel pensioners in their situation. But the government apparently is not prepared to take the advice of the people they pay to prepare these very intensive studies.

There is no mention at all, unfortunately, on the most important issue that faces us in Ontario. There was no mention at all of the fact that two thirds of Ontarians have no pension plan at all. Two thirds of the people of this province have no pension plan at all. It's an enormous problem that needs to be addressed immediately. We know the demographics of this province. We see very clearly what is going to happen in terms of retirements and the increase in retirements over the next few decades with the baby boom getting to the age of retirement. It is inexcusable that the biggest problem in terms of the pension issue in this province is simply being ignored by the government of Ontario. Two thirds—that's unbelievable. I'm very proud that New Democrats have thought about this—we've consulted for years; the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek has done a significant consultation on this—and in January we were able to unveil an Ontario retirement plan that actually is pragmatic, modern and meets the needs of the people of this province in a way that I think makes a lot of sense.

The reality is that the issue of pensions is a discussion that's long overdue. It's a really serious issue that cannot simply continue to be glossed over and ignored by this government, because the fact remains that 65% of Ontarians do not have a workplace-based pension plan, and that simply needs to change. What our plan does is it basically makes it the case that all workers in Ontario—every single worker in Ontario—would be able to participate in a workplace-based pension plan. So that



65% would be able to start saving for their retirement through a pension plan that is participatory by both themselves and their employer.

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We encourage the government to take that plan, to adopt it as its own and to implement it here in Ontario so that the working people of this province have something they can rely on when it comes to their golden years, after many years of working at various workplaces in the province.

Under our workplace pension plan, an employee would automatically be enrolled. If our plan were to come into existence, automatically every worker would be enrolled in this plan. They would have to pay a small contribution on every paycheque, and that contribution would be matched by their employer. No matter where you work and no matter how many times you change employers, from the time you're 16 years old, if that's when your first job is, or if your first is when you're 15 years old, till the time you reach retirement age, you would have this little bit being put away in a public instrument, in a public plan, not a plan that's put together by some insurance company or some bank that gouges you with fees and rips you off with rates—not that kind of plan.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Not like a Bernie Madoff plan—not one of those.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** No, definitely not a Bernie Madoff plan.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** No Bernie Madoffs.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** No.

In fact, under our plan, people would have a public option for saving. From our perspective, that's extremely important. Unfortunately, all this government seems to be prepared to come up with is the same old kind of system that doesn't work right now. The RRSP system simply doesn't work, and I'm not the only one saying that.

Don Drummond, someone who they love to consult with, says that. He says that after 50 years or more, RRSPs have simply not proven the potential that they thought they would be able to achieve. In other words, the vast majority of people don't have them, the vast majority of people haven't been putting money away, and the vast majority of people are going to retire into poverty unless this government decides to do something about it, get its act together and put together a reasonable, practical plan.

Why'd I say "practical?" It's practical because our plan doesn't force people in. You would automatically be enrolled, but you're not forced in. If you believe that you actually have another vehicle for saving that you've been putting into, and you think it's secure, you can opt out of our plan. You don't have to be in the plan if you don't want to. You would be automatically enrolled, but if you wanted to opt out, you would have that choice. It's a very reasonable approach, it's a very mature approach, and it's an approach that recognizes that there are people who really do already have that piece covered off.

But I have to say that we, unfortunately, have a government that refused to make any commitments whatso-

ever in this regard. What we're going to end up doing in this province, and New Democrats are going to continue to do it, is push the government to do the right thing, push the government to adopt our plan, push the government to increase the pension benefits guarantee fund to the \$2,500 and put in place the kind of pension agency that would save the pension funds of organizations like Nortel, which I already mentioned; AbitibiBowater is another good example. There are things that can actually progressively be done by this government to address the retirement incomes of so many hard-working people in this province, but unfortunately they're not prepared to do it.

There are a couple of other issues that families have been telling us that they're really concerned about. One of the biggies, of course, is their health care system. The government has sent some pretty clear signals, and they're not positive ones, in their 2010 budget when it comes to health care. The signal that the government is sending is that there are going to be yet more cutbacks in the health care sector.

We've already seen what has happened in Ontario. We see the creeping privatization of health care under the direction of this Liberal government, and we're going to continue to see more and more of it as this government continues to cut back in terms of its health care investment.

Hospitals right now are announcing reduced numbers of surgeries on an annual basis. They're talking about cancelling and deferring surgeries on a constant basis. There is less care right now, nurses are telling us and health care aides are telling us, less hands-on care right now for patients, less supervision of patients in Ontario. There are massive layoffs of front-line staff here in this province. This is before the cuts in the 2010 budget. This is what people are experiencing already, before last week's announcement.

Of course, Ontarians are already very rightfully worried. It's abundantly clear that something about this government's health care strategy simply is not working, yet the government's proposals on health care rest squarely on starving the health care facilities that are already being forced to cancel and defer procedures and hand out pink slips to critically needed front-line staff.

They've been in this chamber within the last week. We've had nurses from cancer clinics in London come here and say the government is taking away their jobs. The government's laying them off and pulling their support from breast cancer patients and from other patients in the oncology department. This is what this government thinks is good health care, good delivery, but it's the opposite. Patients in this province are telling me, they're telling my colleagues, and they must be telling the government members, because they're telling us that health care is eroding. It's eroding at a very fast pace here in province, and people are very, very concerned already. The government's already clearly failing when it comes to its commitments on health care.

But instead of addressing that in this budget, instead of doing something to reassure people that the health care



that they want and deserve is actually going to be there for them, we get a government that's telling hospitals, "You're not even going to get funded at the bare minimum of what you told us you needed just to keep a very terrible situation in place." The government is saying, "We don't even want it to be terrible. We want it to be worse than terrible, so we're going to give you even less."

That means the 1,800 nurses that have been laid off the last year—that number is just going to grow. Here's a government that, a couple of years ago, was bragging that they were going to hire all kinds of nurses. I can't even remember what the figure was. It was quite significant. It's later on in my remarks, so I'll come to it eventually.

But the reality is that they've done the opposite. They talk a nice game. They talk a nice game, and they brag, and they do the photo ops, and they send out the press releases. But day in and day out, the people of this province see what's happening to their health care system. It's falling apart. It's falling apart under the mismanagement of this government, and people are suffering as a result.

We had people here today, people in the chamber this very day from communities like Port Colborne and Fort Erie who are talking about real people, real tragedies that are occurring before their eyes day in and day out because emergency wards have been closed in their communities and people are being forced to travel significant distances with negative health effects because of this government's decision to shut those services off from those families. That's a disgrace.

With hospital-based funding at less than half the rate of growth and one that falls below the increase that stakeholders had all called for, which was 2%—the government gave only 1.5%—we're worried that hospital care in this province is going to continue to decline.

You know what? The worst thing about it is that instead of there actually being a plan on how to turn things around in the health care sector, the government puts these cuts in place that force hospitals into these knee-jerk reactions. They say, "We're not even going to fund you at the bare minimum that you ask for." Hospitals are in a scramble, and what do they end up doing? Cut surgeries, lay off nurses, reduce the access to care for people in communities. That's not a plan. That's not a plan; that is a shameful, shameful mismanagement of our very precious health care dollars.

Meanwhile, CEOs walk away with \$700,000, \$900,000, over \$1 million—seven figures in terms of their compensation packages. You ask any family and they'll tell you that they think that that's just wrong. That's just absolutely wrong, expecting nurses to take a pay freeze or get laid off while CEOs are making seven-figure salaries. This government has allowed CEOs' salaries to go up by 36% from 2003 to 2008—five years, 36%—and last year alone another 7%. So shame on them. While nurses are being laid off, surgeries are being cancelled, emergency wards are closing and beds are shutting down, the Liberal friends at the very top are

having their pockets filled by this government. It's an absolute disgrace.

Yet what we are going to see is more of the same, because we know the hospitals have their budgets increasing to the tune of about 3.5% annually—that's the regular annual increase—and the government is only providing 1.5%. The simple math shows us that this funding is a prescription for disaster in this province, and that's exactly where this government is headed. It's headed for a disaster in health care. It's extremely worrisome, given that the direct cuts to front-line services and patient care actually started long before this budget was announced a week ago, long before the implementation of these cuts has actually taken place.

The Ontario Hospital Association, in fact, said that any increase under 2% was going to undercut the government's goals with respect to reducing wait times in emergency departments, and obstruct any reduction in surgical wait times, and erode public confidence in our health care system.

So I hope the government is proud and I hope their ministers are happy that the Ontario Hospital Association is giving them such a damning perspective in terms of what the future is going to hold. And I'll repeat it—what the future is going to hold, from the OHA's perspective, based on what this government has just put forward in their budget:

- reducing wait times in emergency departments—those goals are going to be undercut;

- obstruction of any reduction in surgical wait times. In other words, surgical wait times are not going to get any better either;

- it's going to erode the public confidence in our health care system. I would add "further"; it would further erode. Because I can tell you, where I come from there is already significant erosion of public confidence in the health care system.

This government's health care cuts basically reflect a wilful and deliberate decision to destabilize our hospitals. Shame on them for that.

It's interesting, because we've heard some language around a series of reforms that the government is talking about, and the language goes something like "increasing of efficiency and effectiveness in the health care system," yet there's not a scrap of evidence that any variation on a scheme that ultimately amounts to further private involvement will in any way improve patient care in this province.

What we do know is that the patient-based funding model is a competitive model of health care delivery that has been shown in the UK and other jurisdictions to skew incentives for hospitals. In fact, what these programs have done is—they were scaled back. So in the UK, where this plan that the government is now putting out there has been tried—the UK actually pulled back on that model. Why did they pull back? They simply were willing to admit that the end result was that hospitals were not getting the kind of funding they needed to provide the services that were necessary for patients.



So this kind of model doesn't solve the systemic problems that we currently have in our health care system. Instead, it's just more of the same from a government that's willing to pick winners and losers not only when it comes to jobs, but also when it comes to hospitals in Ontario.

We've even actually been through this experiment ourselves in Ontario. Maybe the government doesn't know its own Ontario history when it comes to hospital funding and hospital experiments in terms of funding. In the 1980s, Ontario applied a limited activity-based funding program in specific areas, and before long, do you know what happened? The evidence they got back as a result of the application of the very thing that they're looking to do again—it's kind of like back to the future, eh? Twenty years later, they're going to put in the same thing that failed back in the 1980s.

Postpartum mothers were being forced out of the hospital early. The readmission rate for newborns surged to 60%—60%. If that isn't an indicator that that kind of system doesn't work, I don't know what is. This was a limited experiment. It was only tried in a couple of places, and where it was tried, those readmission rates went up by 60%, but where it wasn't tried, everything stayed the same. So it's not like there was some other kind of environmental variable that was going on, some kind of other issue that was creating those results. The results were very clear: The readmission rates indicated that the system simply was ineffective and was problematic, specifically for the outcomes of the health of the newborns.

Anyway, the bottom line is that these experiences should send a really clear message to the government that they should put the brakes on this plan. They should put the brakes on any plan to reintroduce this kind of failed, anachronistic model of health care funding that doesn't work in the UK and that didn't work when it was tried before in Ontario. Why put in place something that has already proven to be unsuccessful? It's simply wrong-headed.

We've been clear that it's imperative that things do change so that we can actually start to guarantee a high standard of patient-focused care well into the future. We do want to see some change in our health care system. We believe, however, on this side of the House, that there are far more intelligent ways of going about that. I'm going to share a few of those with you, some of the ideas that New Democrats have been putting on the table, including our health critic, the MPP for Nickel Belt. I'm going to put three of them on the table right now during my speech here—ways we can save money in our health care system without cutting front-line services to patients.

In the first place, we should start to have the courage to take on the bureaucratic excesses that exist, some of which I've already talked about, and the consultant contracts that this government seems to favour. The eHealth debacle really did clearly show that too many people are seeking to make a profit off of the health care system

without providing a single bit of hands-on, front-line patient care, and that's a big problem within our system. A lot of people want to get rich at the health care trough who aren't even touching the patients. In fact, when I talk to Linda Haslam-Stroud, the president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, those are the words she uses to describe the work they do, "the people who actually touch the patients." Those are the people we should be providing resources to, the people we should make sure are there in our health care system. Instead, vast amounts of money are going to all kinds of people who don't, at all, touch the patients. That's one of the big problems we have with our system. The growing salaries of senior managers and bureaucrats need to be brought under control once and for all. Once and for all, we need to get a handle on the huge amounts of money being paid to these top bureaucrats, which simply grow and grow every passing year. Seven-figure salaries don't make sense, particularly when we're firing nurses at the same time.

Another thing we need to do is to actually focus more on prevention in this province. According to the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, the province spent \$27.8 billion on direct costs for treating chronic diseases in 2009—\$27.8 billion on direct costs for chronic disease. Some 90% of type 2 diabetes, 80% of coronary heart disease and 30% to 40% of cancers could actually be avoided. They can be avoided with good nutrition, with regular exercise, the elimination of smoking and stress management. If we put some of our resources into these areas that help people to stay healthy or to get healthy, then we will be taking that figure of \$27.8 billion and reducing it significantly. In the meantime, we would have Ontarians who are a lot more happy and a lot more healthy. Yet, we have no meaningful wellness plans that focuses on helping to ensure that Ontarians have the resources to stay healthy and avoid getting sick in the first place. The government has simply ignored this particular area and is doing nothing about it. So instead of helping people to stay healthy, we treat them when they're sick, and we spend billions and billions of dollars doing it.

Third, we need to have a plan to move people out of hospitals. Those patients who are in hospitals only because there's no other place for them have to be moved out of hospitals and back into their homes or another more appropriate facility.

You know, caring for a person in a hospital is very costly. It costs \$600 a day more to care for a person in a hospital than it would to provide for the same person's care in their own home. But thousands of hospital beds continue to be tied up in Ontario with patients who are called alternative-level-of-care patients. These are patients who actually need an alternative level of care, one that needs to be provided somewhere else than a hospital bed: Their home is the best place. In some cases, that's not possible. Long-term-care centres are the other place. Yet these patients are stuck: They're stuck inside the hospitals. And while they're stuck there, at \$600 a day, other patients are unable to access the emergency



wards because the whole system is bound up by the fact that the patients can't get the care that they need outside of the hospital.

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The government has talked about alternative levels of care many, many, times. We hear the talk over and over and over again, but we don't see the action. We don't see the resources being poured into home care. We don't see the solutions being put out into the community that would actually start taking the pressure off of hospitals. Instead, we end up with the same situation of hospitals that are stuck, without the ability of moving on the patients who don't need to be there anymore, and as a result, they are not able to bring other patients in the emergency door.

For no other reason than to save face, this government needs to get serious about these kinds of reforms, the kinds of reforms that not only New Democrats but other health professionals have been urging it to look at for years now.

As I already mentioned, 1,800 nurses lost their jobs last year. That's before this government's cuts in its current budget. Despite the budget promise—here's that figure we were talking about earlier: The budget promise in 2008 was to hire an additional 9,000 nurses. In 2008, 9,000 additional nurses were supposed to be hired by 2011-12.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's funny: The ministers across the way are saying, "Oh, we already did it." Meanwhile, they haven't even reached anywhere near their target, and they're going backwards. They've laid off 1,800; they've come nowhere near the 9,000. In fact, they themselves admitted quite some time ago that they weren't going to meet those targets, but now they're going backwards. In fact, they've been going backwards for quite some time. The very people who provide the hands-on care that people need are being laid off by this government. The budget makes it clear that the plan to continue to cut back in health care means that there's simply going to be more of those kinds of layoffs over the upcoming year.

It's really obvious that this government is lurching from crisis to crisis, and they have no plan whatsoever to stabilize our health care system. It prefers band-aid solutions, unfortunately, to real blueprints that'll get us somewhere in terms of our health care system.

One of the things that we did see recently that we were happy about was the almost \$64 million in child care funding that was provided. That was something that New Democrats supported. We thought it was a good first step. But the thing that's problematic, once again, is that it's a band-aid solution. It addresses only half of the problem, and the government knows very well it only addresses half of the problem. The government barrelled ahead with its all-day-learning package. It wasn't prepared to do that in a way that was going to keep the system stable. Instead, it wanted to make some cheap political wins, and so as a result, it rammed through this

plan. Instead of following the blueprint that was provided—and that they commissioned—by Charles Pascal and putting in place a transition plan and a system that was going to be stable over time, they had to rush it out the door and get a good announcement. As a result, they're going to destabilize the child care system. Everybody knows it.

The \$64 million is going to replace the federal funding that the government chose to use over a five-year period to provide some spaces in this province, so that's positive. But when those four- and five-year-olds come out of those child care centres, the whole system is going to be put into a crisis. What's going to end up happening? Unless this government is prepared to solve the other half of the problem, parents of younger children are going to see their fees skyrocket. Child care centres are going to close in community after community after community. We already see it happening in places like Windsor, right? This government has no solutions. It refuses to acknowledge what every single person in the child care sector is telling them: that they are simply going to destabilize the child care system for the goal of putting a nice little red ribbon around their all-day learning program. And do you know what? New Democrats support all-day learning. We think it's the right thing to do, but it's not the right thing to do on the back of a child care sector that has already been a patchwork for 30 years in this province; it's not the right thing to do unless it's done properly. For the life of me I can't figure out why this government commissions these studies, asks these experts for their best advice and then ignores it—ignores the best advice and puts all of these parents, children and families into jeopardy. It's simply unacceptable.

But it's not new. It's the *modus operandi*—is that what you say, member for Welland?—of this government: knee-jerk reactions, band-aid solutions, no long-term plans, crisis after crisis. It's no wonder that things are not getting better for the people of this province but simply getting worse.

I only have five minutes left; I'm quite surprised. I didn't think I would go for the whole hour, and I still have many, many pages of points to make.

The other thing I wanted to talk a little bit about is the other end of the education system because, again, we see a government that is failing students. They're failing our youngest children and their families, but they're also failing families of our older students, of our higher education students. Because what we see is a budget that once again is pleased and happy to have the government continue in its old pattern. What is that pattern? The highest tuition fees of any students anywhere in this country are paid here in Ontario—the highest tuition fees. The lowest per capita investment for students in post-secondary education is here in Ontario.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Number 10.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Number 10 out of 10. That's the proud record that this government is content with. Yet they want to open up all kind of spaces for fee-



paying students from around the world. And they refuse to acknowledge that the students in this province are leaving their post-secondary studies with debts the size of mortgages. They refuse to acknowledge the fact that they are changing the education system so that the type of education that people end up with, even after their university degree, is worth little more than the paper it's written on because they're relying on part-time professors, they're relying on staff that are not given appropriate hours, that are asked to cobble together a few courses over the period of a school term or a school year. The quality of the education in this province is getting worse while the cost is becoming more expensive. It's a shameful lack of commitment to post-secondary education by this government.

There are a number of other issues that I want to touch on. One is the issue of special diets. Here's the other thing the government wants to do. They put together a budget, and they basically say that in order to get things under control, while CEOs of hospitals are allowed to walk away with seven-figure salaries, the people who are suffering the most in this province—people on social assistance, people who are on social assistance and are unwell, people who are on social assistance and are unwell and require special dietary products to help them become a little bit more well, a little bit more healthy—what does this government do? It cuts them off at the knees, cuts out the special diet, and tries to save a couple of bucks on the backs of the most vulnerable people in this province. That is a shameful picture of what this government is all about. It is absolutely indecent that they would make that kind of move.

This is a government that used to talk about a commitment to an anti-poverty strategy. They have abandoned all pretense of even caring about the growing poverty rates in this province. There's not a single word about affordable housing in this budget. It's a shameful, shameful state of affairs when we see a government that's prepared to tackle a deficit by cutting off special diet, by making sure that the people living in poverty in this province continue to live in poverty, and likely deeper poverty, while at the same time the richest, wealthiest corporations walk away with \$2 billion of tax cuts. Shame on them. Their priorities are absolutely wrong—at least New Democrats believe their priorities are absolutely wrong.

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Another thing we're going to end up doing is paying more for transit fees in the city of Toronto—three bucks already; transit fares are at that level now. And what do we see? We see the government take \$4 billion out of a transit plan that is going to mean all kinds of implications for the people of this area and the people of northern Ontario. Why? Because the trains aren't going to be built, jobs are going to be lost, the environment is going to be affected and the economy is going to be affected.

The board of trade is very critical of this government. It gave them a "D" already—a "D"—in terms of their transportation report card. They are already failing,

almost, and yet they cut transit. The people in Thunder Bay who need jobs so desperately are going to see a risky situation with the Bombardier plant. Why? Because the development of 400 trains is going to be postponed in this province, so that we end up in a situation where those workers, who should have had those jobs now and into the future, will not get those jobs because the investments that need to be there by the company can't be assured without those orders. With those orders cancelled, the people at Bombardier are not going to be able to attract the bidding for orders around the world, because those second-generation trains, the cutting-edge ones of the future, are being held back by this government—lost jobs in Toronto, lost jobs in Thunder Bay and a disgusting lack of vision by this government in terms of transit for Toronto.

Speaker, I've run out of time but I do believe I've put most of the issues that New Democrats are concerned about on the table here. I wish that the government would seriously reconsider some of the directions it took in last week's budget.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm pleased to be able to rise in the Legislature this afternoon following the delivery of the budget by the minister last week and the responses from both the leader of the official opposition and, today, the leader of the third party, and to begin the debate in the context of members in a rotational fashion.

I'm going to take a bit of time in the 20 minutes allocated to provide some context on where we've been, a little bit on where we are, and where this budget will take us.

The leader of the third party spent some considerable time speaking to the issue of health care. There is a tendency in debate in this place to focus on what is wrong with what we're doing, as opposed to sometimes the very good things that happen.

I want to read into the record, if I could, a letter to the Windsor Star from Karen Metcalfe of Windsor. This is dated Tuesday, March 30, 2010. Actually, it was a Friday, March 19 letter, but the clipping came out later. Here's the letter to the Windsor Star:

"Over the past month, I have noticed a significant number of letters putting down the Canadian health care system and many of the health professionals that provide care.

"These people definitely have a right to express their views and I can appreciate that people's health evokes strong emotion and frustration when they feel that they are not a priority.

"However, my experience over the past six weeks leaves me indebted to the health care system in Canada and the health care professionals in Windsor and London. I feel compelled to offer one of the success stories.

"On January 15, I took my almost-five-year-old daughter to the ER at Windsor Regional Hospital ... she had an MRI and within seven hours, she was in an ambulance on her way to London.



"When we arrived at Children's Hospital we were greeted by caring and compassionate staff who continued their great care for our entire 24-day stay. Within 36 hours of our arrival in London, McKenna underwent a 12-hour surgery to remove a brain tumour. A few days later, she had a second surgery and was in critical care for over a week.

"The entire team that oversaw her care, including neurosurgeons, nurses, social workers, child life specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, respirologists, anaesthesiologists, technicians and porters, were professional, compassionate and concerned for McKenna, as well as us.

"She had all the usual tests that were required during a hospital visit and a stay in critical care as well as six MRIs. The team co-ordinated our care at a time when we couldn't think straight and transitioned us back to Windsor with the services we would need to continue our daughter's recovery.

"Because we live in Canada, we were never handed a bill for the services we received and we never will be. I am not suggesting that the system is perfect but it does give the care to those that need it the most when they need it.

"It is also giving my family the opportunity to celebrate my daughter's fifth birthday with her this week. We might sing O Canada, instead of Happy Birthday as we blow out the candles."

It's signed, "Karen Metcalfe, Windsor."

I read that letter into the record. I don't know if anyone has made reference to it in the past few days. I happened to see it in the clippings and thought, in the context of this debate today, that it's always important to put before this Legislature that our professionals in Ontario, our public service, our health care system, provide high-quality service at a time when we particularly need it. I can attest to that on a personal level, from my own personal experience and that of my family, that my experiences have been very much like the Metcalfe family.

I want to take the balance of 15 minutes or so to speak to the 2010 budget at this point in time. I'm pleased to be here to do that this afternoon. The past year has been extremely challenging, with the global recession that we've been experiencing affecting many jurisdictions, and certainly Ontario has been among those. Countries around the world are facing sharp declines in revenue, increasing expenses as people turn to governments for support. In Ontario, we're clear about what we have to do in these times: We have to create jobs, we have to help families, and we have to establish the conditions for future economic growth.

On March 25, Minister Duncan presented our government's seventh budget, and the budget will take immediate action to make Ontario more competitive now and, as importantly, into the future. We're working to bring growth back to our economy while continuing to move to a firmer fiscal footing. The McGuinty government's 2010 budget details the steps that we are taking to

respond to the present challenges and lay out a plan to cut the deficit and then eliminate it entirely. It's the right plan for the times.

Since taking office six years ago, we've remained firm in our commitment to improve the public services Ontarians have come to expect, and I'd suggest that the Metcalfe letter reflects our part in doing that. We're making investments in infrastructure to stimulate economic growth and preserve and create jobs throughout this province. In skills training, we're investing to help unemployed workers retrain for new careers and, in our communities, to keep Ontarians working and help those who are the most vulnerable. These are the measures to establish the conditions for future economic growth as we work to lessen the impact of the current recession.

Our plan is working because we are seeing signs that the economy is turning around. In the third quarter of 2009, the province's economy returned to growth. Real GDP rose by one half of 1%. In January 2010, the Canadian GDP by industry advanced some six tenths of 1%, exceeding economists' expectations. This growth in January marked the fifth consecutive monthly gain and the strongest since December 2006.

Our economy is also on the rise. Just yesterday, Honda Canada announced that it will start up a second shift and add 400 jobs at its second assembly plant in Alliston in early 2011.

I want to speak, if I can, just for a minute about the Japanese Automobile Manufacturers Association, or JAMA, because yesterday they were celebrating their 25th anniversary here at the Legislature. At that time, they were welcomed by Minister Papatello, and at the same time we heard from the president of Honda Canada.

For every car that the Japanese auto manufacturers sell in Canada, they build one in Canada. I think our history would have us think that they sell all of these cars and don't put much back into the economy, but their record is that for every car they sell in Canada, they build one. But the reality is, they build them here in Ontario even if they sell them across the country. They build them here in Ontario. I know that other members of the Legislature will appreciate their long-standing work here in the province of Ontario.

1710

This news from Honda just follows an announcement by General Motors last Friday to add a third shift to its Oshawa facility. I know that the other Durham members, as well as members throughout the House, would want to join me in congratulating General Motors and its employees and to celebrate in their success.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** This will add a third shift to its Oshawa facility, returning many of the needed jobs in that community.

General Motors is also increasing production at its CAMI facility in Ingersoll. The third shift in Oshawa will result in the recall of 600 workers by October 2010, while CAMI will add about 70 jobs by August.



There are other indicators that the economy is in recovery. Housing sales are at record levels. Consumer and business confidence has been improving steadily over recent months. Retail sales are on the increase. Auto sales have risen by some 30% from their December 2009 low. Credit markets are stabilizing. Ontario employment has increased in six of the last eight months as of February this year.

We're proud of this progress, but this economic downturn is not over. Many Ontario families are still coping with uncertainty caused by unemployment or underemployment. Companies, big and small, are still grappling with new ways of doing business in what's becoming a new economy. Municipalities are struggling to respond to the increasing demands of their citizens. Our work is still cut out for us.

The 2010 budget, part of the McGuinty government's Open Ontario plan, will benefit Ontario families, its businesses and communities. It will build on the progress that is slowly but surely making headway toward economic stability. It lays out the measures to manage spending, eliminate the deficit and secure the province's long-term financial sustainability.

On March 8 of this year in the speech from the throne, the Honourable David Onley unveiled the Open Ontario plan, the McGuinty government's five-year plan to create those new opportunities for jobs and economic growth. We see the need for Ontario to be open—more open to global trade, more open to investment, more open to new ideas and more open to the people of the world.

The McGuinty government's 2010 budget moves that plan forward and protects the progress Ontarians have made in our schools and hospitals at the same time as we work to eliminate the deficit caused by this global recession. It sets out the government's priorities to help people and help business.

The 2010 budget details our government's investments in post-secondary education, in jobs, growth in the north, full-day learning, child care and completing the stimulus infrastructure and managing the fiscal house responsibly.

Ontario's colleges and universities play a critical role in equipping people and preparing them for success. It's why just a few years ago the Reaching Higher plan was the centrepiece of an earlier budget, and that's why post-secondary education remains a top priority for our government.

As part of the Open Ontario plan, new commitments to post-secondary education will include adding 20,000 new spaces to colleges and universities in 2010-11, reflecting a new annual investment of \$310 million in post-secondary operating grants.

I had the opportunity over just the past few days to speak with Ron Bordessa, who is the president of UOIT, as well as Sheldon Levy, from Ryerson University. It actually just worked out coincidentally that I was speaking with both of them, but what is particularly coincidental is that my riding straddles both Durham and Toronto, so I had the chance to talk to university presidents in both Toronto and Durham. Both of those

gentlemen—and I think it's reflective of the sector as a whole—were very positive, obviously congratulatory, about the investments we're making and the job they can do with the investments for those 20,000 students that we're preparing for.

We're aggressively promoting Ontario's post-secondary schools abroad to encourage the best students from around the world to study and settle here and to contribute to our economy, and improving students' ability to navigate Ontario's post-secondary system by providing additional resources to support the implementation of a credit transfer system. One of the things we've been hearing during our time with the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, specifically over the past year or two, and more intently from students in particular, is that we need a better mechanism to ensure that students can transfer credits, whether they be between colleges and universities, universities and colleges or between institutions. That's one of the things we want to see move forward out of this budget process.

Creating the University of Ontario Online will bring the best professors in the top programs at Ontario's universities into the homes of those who want to pursue higher learning.

Each year, more than one million Ontarians rely on Employment Ontario for help in finding work and acquiring job training. The McGuinty government has boosted Employment Ontario's spending on jobs and skills training to about \$1.6 billion in 2009-10 and 2010-2011. The special focus will be on workers affected by the global economic recession. By August of 2010, new, one-stop access will be in place to make it easier for job seekers, employers and communities to obtain the full range of programs and services they need.

We'll launch the targeted initiative for older workers with 30 projects in 25 communities across the province. This is a \$58.5-million joint venture of the federal and provincial governments to assist unemployed older workers in vulnerable communities. I'd add, at this point, that any opportunity that we have where the federal government, the provincial government and even our municipal partners as the other order of government can find mechanisms to work together is what Ontarians expect of us. No longer is it acceptable to them that we work in isolation. They very much expect that we will find those mechanisms to best use their tax dollars in a fashion that best serves Ontarians.

Ontario is also investing an additional \$35 million in its 2010-11 summer jobs program, including targeted resources for youth in high-needs neighbourhoods. The summer job program will support 110,000 employment opportunities for students this summer. We know that those young people out there will be seeking summer jobs, and to the extent that we can assist them in doing that with over 110,000 employment opportunities is very important to them.

One of the focuses of this year's budget certainly was northern Ontario. In recent years, Ontario's resource-based industries in the north have faced significant chal-



allenges, including high energy costs and global competition. But as part of Open Ontario, the 2010 document will help strengthen the northern economy. We're creating a three-year northern industrial electricity rate program, averaging \$150 million annually for qualifying large industrial facilities to reduce their electricity prices by an average of about 25%.

We're creating the office of the new Ring of Fire coordinator to lead the collective effort in advancing the economic promise in the area of the Ring of Fire. I won't speak specifically to the Ring of Fire issue. I'm anticipating that, as other members have a chance to rise in this place, one or more, particularly those in the north, will want to comment on that far more directly than I'm going to in the limited time that we have available today.

I want to talk briefly, if I can, about the green economy. It was only a couple of years ago that the Premier set us on a course to make Ontario a leader in the green economy, to make it the place that people will look to for green initiatives. We're beginning to see the fruit of that work and of that thinking. Green energy is going to be a significant source of employment in the near future. I recently spoke with a Scarborough manufacturer, who happens to live in Durham region, and he is moving very aggressively through the FIT program into the production of solar energy opportunities. He's coming from one industrial functionality and enhancing that and growing it very directly from the investments and from the encouragement that we are providing.

The McGuinty government's 2009 Green Energy and Green Economy Act is attracting new investments in renewable energy products and promoting conservation. This program will create 50,000 new Ontario jobs over a three-year span. We're also anticipating new investment in renewable generation by paying renewable energy generators under long-term contracts—it provides that level of stability. A \$7-billion investment in our green economy by Samsung C&T Corp. and the Korea Electric Power Corp. is attracting similar business to our province. We're very proud to say this is the single largest investment in renewable energy in our province's history.

1720

In this particular budget, in the Open Ontario speech, the issue of clean water has been focused on. Global demand for water is expected to rise faster than the supply that will be available. Ontario is well positioned to become a global leader in this sector as it begins to sell its services and technologies around the world. The time allocated to me doesn't provide an opportunity to talk about Eco-Tec in Pickering and the work they do in the clean water area and what they can bring to the table as we pursue the issues of clean water technology.

I'm watching the clock, even without my glasses on, and I see that I'm running out of time more quickly than I would like. To conclude, I think it's time for us to be bullish about Ontario. It's time we began to recognize the good work that's going on, the success that business is having and our part to play in that.

On behalf of my colleague Minister Duncan, I want to ask the honourable members of this chamber to support Bill 16, Creating the Foundation for Jobs and Growth Act, 2010, so that we can move forward with our vision for this province for economic growth and for the benefit of Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's always a privilege to be able to enter the debate on the budget, regardless of the year, because it is probably the most important thing we debate as members of this chamber.

Obviously, as members of Tim Hudak's PC caucus, we won't be supporting this budget, because we've got serious concerns with how they're managing the affairs of the province. One only has to look at today's sunshine list to see that they have tripled the people making over \$100,000 in the public sector in the province since they've taken office. During that period of time, they've also doubled the debt of this province, and they have tripled our reliance on welfare cheques from the federal government through equalization.

Who would have thought, six years ago when this government took office, that Ontario would be a have-not province? Unfortunately, Mr. McGuinty has found a way to do that. It's because he is spending more money than he is taking in. It's because spending in this province has gone up dramatically. Program spending alone has gone up by 70% since they have taken office.

It might be a matter that they're proud of over there, but I can assure you that each and every day I speak to residents in the Nepean-Carleton—moms and dads like my husband, Joe, and I—who are struggling to make ends meet. They can't afford Mr. McGuinty anymore, and they certainly can't afford more tax hikes, hidden fees and surprises from this government like they found at eHealth and now with the local health integration networks.

Again, I do feel it is a privilege to speak to the Ontario budget; however, it has severely disappointed us in the official opposition and it has let the people of Nepean-Carleton down.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I too would like to share the optimism of the members across there, but I have trouble getting there.

I can only talk about Hamilton. They've mentioned a few hundred jobs here and there throughout the auto sector in southern Ontario, but let's talk about the last two months in Hamilton. Probably around 1,600 jobs have left. When I started at Stelco in 1975, I couldn't get a parking spot along Burlington Street, the industrial heartland of Ontario. I couldn't get a parking spot sometimes when I went to work in 1970s. Well, trust me: If you took a cannon and fired it along Burlington Street today, you wouldn't hit anything but may be a rat or a cat. That's how bad it is. We've got hundreds of build-



ings empty. We've got thousands and thousands of jobs gone out of the Hamilton area.

I don't know where these guys are talking all this optimism from, but it certainly isn't happening in Hamilton. Yes, we're getting some influx of medical jobs, and that's great, but let's talk about all these nursing positions they were going to create. I'll tell you right now, the graduating class in London can't get jobs. They can't get jobs, even in London, in the hospitals. These are the brightest kids that are coming out of nursing school, and they can't get a job. But there are recruiters coming up from the States looking at them, to send them down to maybe Texas or California to work as nurses, because they can't get jobs in Ontario.

This government keeps touting all the great work they're doing in the health sector. Tell me why they laid off 147 people—health care workers, cleaning staff—in Hamilton. They laid off 32 nurses at St. Joe's hospital. They're laying off more nurses at McMaster and at Hamilton General. What's going on? I don't know. They've got all these numbers. I don't know where they get them from, because it certainly isn't happening in my neck of the woods. Maybe they should get in their car, take a ride and get a dose of reality, because it is really isn't happening like they say it is.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** It's kind of shameful to listen to my friend from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. I had the pleasure of attending Hamilton Economic Development's luncheon the other day, where they announced—indeed, the member's right—that they've lost 25,000 jobs in Hamilton in the last five years. And they announced that 40,000 jobs have been created. That's not us, that's not my friend Sophia, and it's not Paul. But the sackcloth and ashes that come out of some of the members from Hamilton on the opposition are—40,000 jobs in a recession.

I tabled in this House a list of 25 companies I found on the Internet that had expanded and grown jobs—50, 60, 100 jobs—in composite materials, IT, multimedia, retail. And I sat there—I probably met two dozen CEOs of different companies, investors and labour leaders who were talking about their investments. That was before. And the McGuinty government is now delivering what? We are delivering the Innovation Park with McMaster University, making Hamilton a global leader in advanced composite materials; an LRT line down James Street, the east-west line; a new GO station at Liuna Station; a major stadium—in addition to the private sector creation of 40,000 jobs, a new stadium in west Hamilton Bay, all connected to a central arts district, a creative centre hub, an expansion of Mohawk College and some of the biggest investments in life and health sciences ever, which will have huge spin-offs.

The people I talked to in Hamilton and Ontario are excited about the Open Ontario plan. They understand that. Maybe the member from Hamilton East should talk to the president of Hamilton Economic Development

rather than the whiners and complainers who have nothing but short-term political gain by dissing the very fine city of Hamilton, which deserves better.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** That certainly has livened things up.

The member for York—Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to respond to the speech given by the member for Pickering—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for York—Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to make a few comments today in response to the government's comments on the budget.

Most people understand budgeting. They understand that they have revenue, they go to work, they get a paycheque. If they're lucky, they have some savings from which they derive some interest. But what they know about that money that comes in is that there are some mandatory things like rent and food and taxes and things like that that they have to spend it on. But they also know what happens—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order, member for Hamilton East. Will the member for Hamilton East come to order, please?

Member for York—Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I want to just remind people that, as I was saying, everybody has a budget, and they understand that they must live within that budget. They understand that if they don't—they may not call it a deficit at home, but they understand that there is a gap, and that gap growing between what they have and what they have spent may reflect on the credit card as it gets maxed out. They understand the serious nature of what they are doing. So most families understand, then, that you can't spend money you don't have. This government doesn't understand that.

1730

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Pickering—Scarborough East, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** First, let me extend a thanks to the members from Nepean—Carleton, Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Toronto Centre and York—Simcoe for their interventions and their two-minute responses.

Let me just generalize. It wasn't much more than a year ago, in the midst of this global recession, that the discussion was very much different. I would suggest that we—the world, and Ontario was not immune to this—were on the very edge of something far more significant that we have been able to bring ourselves if not out of, then at least to avert that catastrophic situation fiscally that we were all faced with. To a large extent, we have to credit the Canadian financial system, and give credit where credit is due to the financial leadership that comes



federally for that over a great period of time. I think it has stood us in good stead as we move forward.

In the last major recession that we had, the last very significant recession, it was the member from the third party whose party was in government at that point in time. They took a different approach as to how to deal with public services. We want to build on those public services and continue to respect those people who do that job. They were busy tearing down and breaking every public service contract in the province of Ontario.

We have a different approach. We have built our public services, we respect those public services and we're going to continue to work with them as we all, together, work our way out of this problem that we have.

Governments do have to, at times, borrow money for the purposes of their business. We find ourselves in a significant recession, and we have set out a very strategic, well-planned mechanism to move out of that deficit and back to balance. In doing that, we're going to grow the economy as we move ourselves out of there. We're going to provide public services and we're also going to grow the economy and we're going to come back to balance.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure this afternoon to have an opportunity to speak to the Ontario budget that was presented last week. I hate to say it, but I don't have quite the view of the last speaker. I see this budget as being a continuation of what we've seen in the last number of years, and that is out-of-control, reckless spending.

The past speaker was talking about our situation last year. I would characterize it slightly differently. I would say we came to the edge of the cliff and we've now gone off the edge of the cliff and we have a long way—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, I disregarded one comment that you made toward the chair. Now you're not in your place and you're making more—much more. You might be watching this on TV.

Member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying, this budget is a continuation of the past practices of the McGuinty government, and that is, they are continuing with their out-of-control spending.

It's like this government is in never-never land. They don't seem to realize that there was a recession that happened in October 2008. They're talking a good game about restraint in this budget; I'll look further into that restraint in a few minutes, but the fact of the matter is, they're going to set a record for spending this year—\$126 billion in spending this year.

When they came to power in 2003, the budget was \$68 billion. That's over a 70% increase in spending. This government doesn't have a revenue problem; they've got a spending problem. So even when we're in the midst of

a recession that started in October 2008, they just keep on finding new ways to spend more money.

We're on track to double the debt of the province—double the debt. This is debt that's going to be borne by our children and our grandchildren, as the government is at about \$140 billion—as I say, they're on track to double that debt. That means that the interest payments, as pointed out in the budget papers, are on track to double, to some \$16 billion by 2016-17—\$16 billion. That's \$16 billion just to service the increased debt that the McGuinty government is running up.

As the member from York–Simcoe was pointing out in her comments, in the last number of years Ontario families have had to live within their budget. They've recognized that there's only so much money coming in, and they have to live within their means. That's something that this government has just not been able to recognize. As I mentioned, they just keep finding new ways to spend money. They haven't been able to prioritize spending, so that when I travelled around the province recently with the pre-budget hearings, I heard that one in six children are not receiving proper children's mental health care. You hear about all sorts of health problems across the province. This budget has done nothing to stop the way this government has been ramping up public sector job creation at eight times the rate of private sector job creation. We've seen a huge increase in the number of the public sector, but we haven't seen the same thing happen—in fact, we've seen job losses in that all-important private sector.

In the budget they're talking about restraint, and I call it the “phantom” restraint, because what they've said is, they're going to have restraint for the non-unionized workers. It's kind of the tip of the iceberg; that's the way I would characterize it. They've said they're freezing salaries of the non-unionized workers. Half the budget is wages, but most of it is the unionized part of the public service. There's about 1.2 million public sector workers in the province. A couple of hundred thousand of those are municipal, so they aren't being considered. But the majority of that million are the unionized sector, so they're not being dealt with at all in this budget, really. The government is saying that when the contracts expire—most of which do conveniently after the next election—that's when they won't see pay increases. We'll see whether they really stick to that or not. I would question whether they actually will.

But with the other part of it, though, the people whose wages have been supposedly frozen immediately—if you look at the fine print in the budget bill, what does it say? Well, there are loopholes that you can drive a Mack truck through. This is in the budget bill:

“If the rate of pay falls within a pay range that is in effect for a particular position or office on the applicable effective date, the employee or office holder's rate of pay may be increased within that pay range in recognition of any of the following matters only”—and only—“if the increase is authorized under the compensation plan as it existed on the applicable effective date:



“(1) His or her length of time in employment or in office;

“(2) An assessment of the performance”—in other words, a performance review;

“(3) His or her successful completion of a program or course of professional or technical education.”

So even the supposed pay freeze on the non-unionized part of the public service isn't actually a pay freeze. This is how serious the government is about trying to rein in their out-of-control spending—not very serious at all. I think it's demonstrated very clearly when you see things like the severance pay being paid out for the HST tax collectors. I think most rational people, most businesses would agree that the purpose of severance is for transition when you lose your job. Well, those HST tax collectors, I guess come July 1st, are going to switch from being employees of the Ontario government to being employees of the federal government. They're not going to miss a day's work. They're not going to necessarily even switch geographic areas. They'll have to have a different business card. In most cases, they're getting a pay raise. This government is paying out severance, which is up to \$45,000 for each of the individual—I believe it's 1,200—HST tax collectors. How does that make any sense at all, especially when you're facing such a huge deficit in the province of Ontario? How does that make any sense? How does that show any restraint?

1740

The cost of that one item is some \$25 million. That's why we had an opposition day motion yesterday to debate that item. That's why, when the budget bill is debated and when we get the first opportunity, the opposition is going to move an amendment to the budget bill to give the government the opportunity to deem those workers not to have lost their jobs. I think most of us would agree they have not lost their jobs.

I would point to BC. BC is not paying severance. They had the wherewithal to look after their taxpayers' money so that they aren't paying out, in our case, an additional \$25-million severance pay to these tax collectors.

I would like to go on to some of the items that are in the budget. The government is focusing on northern Ontario. Well, it's about time because of what's happened in northern Ontario. Just about every plant, every mill, every paper mill has closed in northern Ontario. We lost some 45,000 jobs. It's about time you paid some attention to the north. They have a subsidy for energy for the people who live in the north. They're going to need it because, come July 1, everyone's energy bill is going up 8% with the HST. The lucky folks in the north are going to get some compensation for that.

We've just heard that there's also another 9.6% increase that's going through on energy prices. We've also learned recently that there's a—I believe it's \$53 million—hidden tax that's being put on everybody's energy bill across the province.

They also have this northern industrial energy plan. As usual, it's a poorly-thought-out plan. I'm sure those businesses that are left in the north will appreciate the

two-cents-a-kilowatt-hour reduction, although I've already had calls from businesses in the north.

I had a call from a business in the Timmins area just this week pointing out to me the flaws when the government starts doing their usual winners-and-losers game. This was a small, independent mill. They happen to use about one megawatt of power. The plan the government has come up with is for large industrial users, so it's only if you use five megawatts of power. All of a sudden, this mill's neighbours and competitors are going to be paying a lot less for their energy than his business. Is that fair?

I would ask also, is it fair that businesses that happen to be just south of that line that you've drawn in the sand—some that happen to be in my riding, but they're in the same business. I could name businesses like Panolam in the Huntsville area, a company that makes fibreboard and uses a lot of energy in that process; Kimberly-Clark, which makes tissue paper; or the Tembec hardwood flooring plant that are all just south—literally 10 kilometres—of the border. All of a sudden all of their competitors that are north of the border are going to have an unfair advantage against them. As usual, the plan has not been thought out very carefully.

There's been a lot of talk by the government about the Ring of Fire and the possibilities there. As opposition, we're all in favour of providing economic opportunity and trying to create jobs in the north, and mining is a great way to do it. The Ring of Fire is a very exciting chromite discovery in northwestern Ontario. The problem is that this government's high-energy policies caused where that ore might be processed to be at risk. The more competitive energy jurisdictions of Quebec and Manitoba might be the sites for where the ore is processed. We've just seen in Timmins the large smelter at Xstrata close down. Higher energy prices were a reason for that mill shutting down.

The past members talked a lot about their green energy plan. With this government, as with so many of their plans, it's more about optics than good policy. The one thing absolutely for sure you can count on with the Green Energy Act is that all Ontarians are going to be paying more for their electricity prices—and not just a little bit more; a lot more.

This government has said there are going to be 16,000 jobs. We've heard about the Samsung jobs, where they're again picking the winners and losers, and we know that those jobs cost about \$340,000 each. But the question I have for the government is: How many jobs are we going to lose across the province because high energy prices for industry make us uncompetitive and make us, as a province, unable to attract those jobs, especially if they happen to be high energy users.

When you have your buy-high, sell-low plan, where you buy electricity at 80 cents a kilowatt hour for solar power and 45 cents a kilowatt hour for wind power, and you don't plan for the baseload because you haven't moved on nuclear energy, we know for sure that all ratepayers, including industry, are going to pay much higher electricity costs to cover those plans, which I say



are really more about optics than about providing the reliable, affordable electricity that the province needs to be competitive.

The theme of my talk has been that government spending is out of control. It is out of control because, despite us being in really tough times, they keep coming up with new programs that may be good ideas, but you have to decide: Can you afford them? Also, if you're going to do them, you should at least implement them in a way that makes sense. So they have full-day learning, a new and very expensive program that the government is coming forward with at a time when we're facing a huge deficit. That program is going to cost somewhere between \$1.5 billion and \$6 billion per year to implement, and just last week, at the early stages of Bill 242, I met with the YMCA, which runs thousands of child care spaces across the province, and they're telling me about the problems it is causing for them, partly because of the way the government is implementing it.

Bill 242 requires school boards to implement full-day kindergarten, even though the YMCA currently has all kinds of programs in the schools and is partners with school boards. They won't be allowed to run the programs before and after school because this government is dictating that the school board will run them with unionized workers, and the YMCA happens to have non-unionized workers. They are providing the program for before and after school for about \$17 per child for those families. The cost when the school board runs it is going to be about \$35 per child.

What do you think is going to happen? The YMCA is going to shut down their programs, because they're not allowed to run them, the school board will make it available at \$35 a child and the parents won't be able to afford it. So all of a sudden they're going to have to rely on other, probably less formal, methods of child care before and after school. Not only that, but the way full-day kindergarten and learning is being implemented is going to gut those child care programs. So as the leader of the third party pointed out, it is going to completely destabilize the current child care system that we have.

Health care is a huge issue for all of us. As I travel around my own riding, they're going through a deficit reduction plan right now. In the northern part of my riding, in Burk's Falls, we've seen the Burk's Falls urgent care centre close. In the current plan, they're cutting back the number of hospital beds in Huntsville and Bracebridge. In this budget, a 1.5% increase for hospitals has been put forward. That essentially means more health care cuts. We in the opposition are saying that you've created this new bureaucracy—the local health integration networks—and we see that as a diversion of money that should be going to front-line care: for the ever-increasing demand for doctors, nurses and patient care. The LHINs are a diversion of money that should be going to front-line care.

A couple of years ago, when Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare happened to have a \$1.6-million deficit, in the local paper at exactly the same time, the local LHIN was

spending \$1.6 million on upgrades to their offices and on office furniture. That's what we mean by diverting money that should be going to front-line care to the bureaucracy and to aspects of management, but not the actual health care people want.

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I can see that time is running down. I'd like to focus for a moment on the credibility of the numbers this government puts forward. The numbers change so often that you never know what game they're playing. A look back at the last year: A year ago, the budget said there was going to be a \$14-billion deficit. That was after the recession had already hit; that was October 2008. We're now in March 2009 with a \$14-billion deficit. You've had lots of time to plan. No surprise there. We're already in the recession. Then we hit June, and all of a sudden, the number goes up to \$18 billion. Well, there were some unexpected things that came along—\$4 billion—so we're at \$18 billion. Then we hit September, and surprise, surprise, the number has gone up to \$24.7 billion.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Times are tough, yes.

Then, miraculously, the day before the budget is announced, it went down \$3 billion to \$21.3 billion. How did that miraculous change happen? If you read on page 68 of the budget, it says "Total revenue"—the finance minister, when he made that announcement, was saying, "Spring is here. Things are improving; things have really improved all of a sudden." When you read on page 68, it says, "Total revenue in 2009-10 is estimated to be" \$96.4 billion. "This is \$239 million ... below the fall 2009" estimate. It's below the estimate, so how did we suddenly save \$3 billion? We spent \$2 billion less on H1N1 than planned for, \$500 million less on interest, and we counted the reserve in that. That's how, miraculously, the day before the budget was presented, this year's deficit went down \$3 billion.

Those are the sorts of games this government plays. The finance minister last week was doing a speech, and he's already speculating about what's going to change next.

My time has gone quickly. I would simply like to say that the eight-year plan to balance the budget is just without credibility—absolutely without credibility. It's two elections—two elections. Especially when you look at the history of the way they play with numbers—two elections. Most economic booms don't last eight years, yet this government continues adding new programs, adding new spending, and gives us this never-never land prediction of when they're actually going to balance the budget.

It's a disappointment for the opposition. They still have not learned to try to control their spending one bit.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened carefully to the comments made by the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka on behalf of his party, the Conservative Party.

New Democrats are looking forward to a chance—we're not going to have it because it's getting close to 6



of the clock, as the Speaker is inclined to note. We're not going to have that chance today. I know that Paul Miller, the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, is eager to talk about the situation in Hamilton-Niagara. It's a region that has been devastated—devastated, I tell you.

We used to reel at the prospect of losing 1,000 jobs. Now losing 150 or 15 jobs leaves us in shock because there just aren't any jobs left. We've got folks down in Niagara who've had their hopes dashed when they thought there would be a prospect of retraining, but then they realized there's nothing really to retrain for.

The casino? Well, the casino used to be the employer of last resort. If you lost your job at Atlas Steel, Union Carbide, Page-Hersey, Welland Tubes or John Deere, there was a time when you could go to Niagara College and take a course as a slot machine mechanic or as a blackjack dealer and get hired on at the casino. But the casino is laying people off now. I'm talking about the Niagara Falls casino; it's laying people off now. The slots at Fort Erie Race Track are suffering the same situation.

We've got folks coming into our constituency offices and saying, "Train me for what?" I had occasion of mentioning the other day: What are you going to do? Are you going to take a guy or gal off the production line at John Deere, who worked hard for 25, 26 or 27 years, got some good trades, maybe a welder or a pipe fitter, and put them in a tutu and send them down University Avenue here to dance the ballet at the Toronto ballet centre? Come on.

The economy is in sad, sad shape and families are reeling, families are suffering, and this government doesn't even reach out with some modest hope for those families, some modest relief, in this budget. Shame on them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I listened very intently to the remarks from the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka. He has been a member here for a while, and I think for a period of time he was the finance critic for the official opposition.

I think we've got to look at things in context here. We—not just Canada and the United States, but the world—experienced a severe economic downturn because of the ultimate destruction of the financial system in the United States that spread throughout the world. We went from a time in North America where we produced 17 million new units each and every year that were consumed in North America—we witnessed that that has declined to 11 million units in any given year. So that had repercussions for a fundamental restructuring of the auto sector in the province of Ontario. In the last number of days, we've heard some inkling of good news with regard to General Motors and Honda here in Ontario: that they've embarked upon a rehiring, bringing back those laid-off workers and creating some new jobs.

I would like to hear from my good friend the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka what his plan is. He said it's not credible to balance the books in eight years. I want to

know his plan for balancing the books. I want to know if he's against funding those child care spaces in the province of Ontario, and I want to know if he's against full-day kindergarten. He would do us all a big favour. He's criticized our budget. I want to know where he stands and where the official opposition stands in terms of their plan for Ontario to reduce the deficit, how they're going to handle child care spaces, and a whole range of other items in our province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've been sitting rather quietly here this afternoon listening to some of the sidebars, but more importantly, listening to the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, our critic on this file, and I commend his insight.

When he was briefing our caucus, our leader, Tim Hudak, put forward the 10 for 2010 plan—and the member from Peterborough referred to that. But I think it goes deeper than that. If the people are following the issue here today, they know that what's happening is—it's by stealth, really. They're actually extracting the future wealth of this province.

Here's what I'm saying: We know that the economy—they pumped the inflationary money in called infrastructure funding—is going to create inflation, and with inflation we know the interest rate is eventually going to go up. Here's what has happened: They've taken the debt from about \$130 billion to \$300 billion. The cost of supporting the debt today, in this budget, at the low interest we're all experiencing, is \$10 billion. If they increase that by 2%, the cost of servicing our accumulated debt is going to double almost before their term is over. So the jig is up. You're financing current spending on future taxes. Whatever way you cut it, it's borrowed money. Almost 20 cents on every dollar they're spending is borrowed, and it's borrowed from our youth and the future of this province.

So the health care that's in peril today, the economy that's in peril today, is after seven years of no plan and no vision for the province of Ontario. I'm disappointed.

Our critic certainly will bring forward for our leader a plan, and our plan is clear. We have a vision for Ontario that's missing today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to commend the member from Parry Sound. He had a lot of good points.

I was really fascinated by some of the retorts from the government side. In particular, one member said that they had created 40,000 jobs in Hamilton. That's amazing. I have people in my office every day laid off from steel, laid off from other factories in Hamilton that have closed. I could go through the list. He admitted they had lost 25,000 jobs in the last 20 years or so, and then he said they created 40,000. I don't know what city they were created in, and I'll be looking forward to the list he's going to provide me with, the breakdown, which he said he would, of all the jobs that are in Hamilton proper that



have been created by his government in the last six years, I guess. I don't know where I was for six years, but I had lots of people lined up in front of my office looking for jobs and Second Career training. In fact, we're off the map for Second Career training.

If there are 40,000 jobs in Hamilton and 25,000 lost, I guess all those people should be gainfully employed and happy. They shouldn't be in front of my office looking for retraining or jobs. So I'm really looking forward to this list of all these, I would like to say, mystic jobs that have been created by this gentleman, who is—I don't know if he has ever set foot in Hamilton; maybe once. That's good. He was a mayor of Winnipeg, from Toronto. So I'm very curious to see—I hope he can provide me with all the names of the companies that got these 40,000 jobs and where they're located in Hamilton, because I'll be really fascinated to see that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to the members from Peterborough, Durham, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and Welland for their comments.

The member from Durham highlighted interest rates. If you go to page 49, you'll note that the government is planning on doubling the interest on the debt up to \$16.2 billion a year in 2017-18. A noteworthy fact on that is that if the interest rates go up 1%, there's a great risk, because that's another \$500 million for each 1% interest rate increase. And where do you think interest rates are

going right now? They're going up as the economy improves.

The member from Peterborough asked about what we are putting forward. We've been very clear and we've put forward 10 for 2010, and you can find those ideas at 10for2010.ca, which Tim Hudak, the leader of the PC Party, has put forward. It's ideas like dealing with red tape. I don't think red tape was even mentioned in the provincial budget. If you talk to just about any business out there, they'll tell you how they're being smothered by the red tape of this government, how it's gotten worse in the last few years, and how that makes it so much harder to do business. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that in Ontario, the cost of red tape is some \$11 billion per year. So that's something that in 10for2010.ca we plan to deal with, to change the way that businesses have to live and work and create jobs, so that instead of only being the police, like this government, the government actually comes around, explains the rules and then helps them comply with the rules instead of trying to shut down those small businesses.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It being 6 of the clock or a little past, this House is adjourned until 9 of the clock on April 1, 2011. Oh, wait, I jest too soon. Tomorrow is April Fool's Day. Have a good April Fool's Day. We're adjourned until 9 o'clock on April 1, 2010.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum  
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<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
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Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances



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Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin-Middlesex-London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough-Agincourt	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth-Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe-Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 1 April 2010

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 1<sup>er</sup> avril 2010



Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 1 April 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 1<sup>er</sup> avril 2010

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### 2010 ONTARIO BUDGET

#### BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2010

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 31, 2010, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It's a delight to stand up here and talk about this budget. In the time allotted to me today, only 20 minutes, I want to concentrate on three aspects of the budget which I find troubling and somewhat puzzling, those three aspects being transit, poverty and hospitals.

**Interjection:** It's an April Fool's joke.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'm hearing something about an April Fool's joke. I want to remind everyone that what I'm going to be saying is not an April Fool's joke.

First of all, in terms of transit, I have lived my whole life in the city of Toronto, or the megacity of Toronto as it now is, with the exception of one year in Ottawa. I am a city boy, I freely admit that, and I have a great and abiding sense of the need for proper transit. Now, in the last couple of years, I watched as the Premier went around Toronto, was in all of the Toronto newspapers, was on the radio and on the television speaking again and again about the monies that were going to be put into transit in this city. I saw what he promised in Ottawa and other major cities across this province, and I have to tell you I was somewhat impressed.

I didn't think that the government was up on the transit file when they were first elected, but I was somewhat impressed over that period of time that the Premier put a real emphasis and a real understanding about getting people out of cars and getting on to public transit. He seemed to understand the problems of gridlock.

We've all seen in this last week or so the reports coming from around the world, highlighting different cities and the problems they have with gridlock. It should be of no surprise to Torontonians that we are dead last, that it

takes 80 minutes for the average commute for people to come in to go to work or to go to school everyday.

The whole idea of building proper and sustainable transit is one which the people of the greater Toronto area, and particularly in the city of Toronto, embraced. When the Premier stood up there and announced the \$9-billion plan, he was joined by Mayor Miller, who so many times effused about the Premier understanding Toronto, and understanding and promising and saying that we're on track to spend this money, to build transit that we have not done in a decade.

I looked at the places where it was going to be built, knowing this city very well. I looked out into Scarborough and the light rapid transit and the extension along Sheppard. I looked into Downsview and what was going to be built there. I looked out into the GTA and the Viva system and what was going to be built there. And all of them were plans that were meticulous, well-thought-out, important, and they were going to help.

So for the last year or so, I've been saying very little in this House on the transit file, because I don't think I had anything to be critical of. What was being planned and what was being promised seemed reasonable and rational, and if I was on that side of the House, I would hope that I would promise much the same thing.

You can imagine the dismay of the people of Toronto, you can imagine the anger that was palpable from the mayor when he saw that in the budget this government determined that it was no longer the priority that it had been, that all of those stage presences and all of those announcements with the mayor were for naught, because at the first sign of any trouble, the first sign of any difficulty, the government retreats from their major promise.

They say now, "Oh, it's okay. It's simply put off for a few years, and maybe a few years down the road we'll be able to get back onto the transit file and do what we promised to do." Well, that has been the problem all along from successive governments—this one and the one before, I'm sure. That has been the problem. As soon as the times get tough, the people back off and the governments back off. I'm saying to this government that you ought not to be doing that. I'm saying to this government that a promise made should be a promise kept. I know these are difficult economic times, I know that you have priorities, but I always thought that transit was one of them.

When you travel around the city, you cannot help but note the gridlock. You cannot help but note in rush hours, particularly after about 7 or 7:15 in the morning, the traf-



fic starts to tie up at the intersections. You cannot help but note that it is very difficult to do commerce, and when a truck stops to unload at any of our stores along major arterial routes, the cars get tied up behind it. There's virtually no possibility for the trucks and the delivery people to do the commerce they are required to do other than to park, unload and do what they need to do 24 hours a day. The lineup of cars behind them is certainly noticeable, and the backup keeps getting worse and worse and worse.

0910

We know from economic studies that in the Toronto area we are losing billions of dollars a year in terms of gridlock. We also have to think of the waste in terms of human lives; 80 minutes' commute a day to come to work certainly has to be hard on personal time, family time and everything else. So I have to state that I am very disappointed with this government and very disappointed with the answers around this entire issue that have come from the Premier and the finance minister in question period in the last several days. I'm very disappointed because there are alternatives, and alternatives are not being looked at.

One of the alternatives, of course, is to try to find the money to do this. Other provinces are saying, end the tax cuts. Just yesterday and the day before, I looked at Quebec and their budget, and they have simply ended tax cuts to corporations. That's what they did; they looked at what was going to help. And many of the corporations will tell you that if you can get rid of gridlock, they can save money and do a better job. So I think that getting rid of that tax cut and keeping the promise to transit would have been a far better idea of this government.

Although it is not my community, I also look at what this wrong-headed decision is going to do to the people at Bombardier in Thunder Bay. That factory, which produces streetcars, subway cars, rail cars and the like, was geared up to produce a lot of streetcars and subway cars under this \$9-billion transit plan. They have now been told that this is all going to be put on hold, and because it's going to be put on hold, the economic planning is not going to be there, the people who were going to be hired and who will continue to work are not going to be there, and it is going to cause some considerable economic difficulty for the people of Thunder Bay, as well as, of course, the people of Toronto and Ottawa and Hamilton and London and every other major city across this province that has public transit.

I ask the government to think about this. It's not too late—we're in the middle of debate—to come back and do something else. It is not too late for you to take the idea that transit should be at the top of the list instead of something that can be fluffed off for later, for later, for never. That's what I'm worried about and exactly what I see is going to happen.

The second issue I want to talk about is hospitals. I've stood up in this House and asked questions over the last couple of weeks about what is happening in our hospitals. Today is April 1, and on this date, Toronto East

General Hospital has closed its physiotherapy unit. They have closed down a unit that has been there for a long time, and they have done so because of the budget cut-backs.

When I met with the CEO, Mr. Rob Devitt, a decent and good man, he told me that he wished he could have kept it open. He said that he understood the need for a physiotherapy unit within our community—this is provided only to those people who require physiotherapy as a result of operations and medical procedures that have taken place at Toronto East General Hospital. He understood the need for continuing that service, but what could he do? He had been told by this government to expect a 1% or 2% increase in the hospital's funding, and he had to determine, given that his costs were going up 5%, how he could make cuts in areas where the impact, in his view, might be minimized. He looked to those things that are required for a hospital to do, and he saw that one of the things that could be cut, or had to be cut and that he was reluctant to cut but had to, was the physiotherapy unit. So today, my community has a hospital with no physiotherapy unit, and the government, in its wisdom, came forward with 1.5%.

That is causing grief at Toronto East General Hospital but also in other hospitals in the Toronto area. Most of the people I represent do use Toronto East General Hospital as their community hospital, but there is another hospital in close proximity that people often go to, particularly if they are war veterans, and that is Sunnybrook, because Sunnybrook has specialized services and is a veterans' hospital as well. So, many of the people in Beaches—East York, particularly veterans, go to Sunnybrook Hospital.

I received a letter from a nurse. The nurse asked me to be confidential and not to use the name. I'm not going to use the name, but I would like to read, in part, from the letter that the nurse sent me about what is happening at Sunnybrook Hospital. This letter was written in advance of the budget but certainly in anticipation of what was going to happen when hospital budgets were allowed only 1.5%.

This nurse writes:

"I can almost guarantee you that on a daily basis, our nurses will be working short which will in turn, further increase our fatigue and 'burn out' rates and thus sick calls. It is unacceptable to expect this of us and put our practice and the safety of our patients at risk.

"Our hospital has adopted the practice of routinely placing stable admitted patients into the hallway in front of desks to await for the next available beds. This practice is degrading and embarrassing in a foundation such as ours that prides ourselves in the care that we provide. Stripping a sick patient of the privacy of even a curtain, forcing them to be toileted and sleep in a noisy hallway because there are no beds available on the ward due to closed units from, once again, 'budget restraints' is unacceptable.

"Please review this process and allow more funding for ward beds, to decongest the emerg and remove the



practice of hallway admissions. I'm sure that you would not want your family member lying on a hard stretcher in front of a desk in the hallway for three days."

If you look at the budget, the budget contained only 1.5% for hospitals, and the 1.5% is certainly not adequate to maintain the hospitals at any kind of level that Ontarians have come to expect, which leads me to another very puzzling strategy of this government.

This government has announced a diabetes strategy, that they want to invest \$8.5 million in the coming year for the diabetes strategy going to as many as 14 regional coordination centres, and they want to expand chronic-kidney-condition services. Now, ordinarily I would think this was a wonderful thing. Ordinarily, I would be standing up and applauding the government for its foresight, for what you're doing and what you're thinking and how you're hoping to help people. But as it relates to the diet supplement, I wonder why this government is taking action to fund diabetes and to help the diabetes strategy and at the same time hurting those people who are diabetics.

I would like to quote from another letter. This letter was not sent directly to me, although I did get a carbon copy of it. It was sent to Glen Murray, MPP, 514 Parliament Street, from one of his constituents, with carbon copies to the Premier and Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services. I think this letter says it all in terms of a real diabetes strategy and what this government, in announcing that they're giving \$8.5 million for a diabetes strategy, is really not doing to help people who are diabetic. I quote this letter:

"I have diabetes and have had it for the past 30 years. My diabetes is not insulin dependent and part of that is because I work very hard to manage my illness. This means monitoring my blood sugar daily and controlling it through my diet. Diabetics, as you may know, are very limited in what they can eat. We need to be eating fresh vegetables and fruit and lean protein to ensure that our blood sugar remains stable. Diabetics cannot eat junk food or fast food. We need to eat real food. We can't eat empty calories like pasta and rice because these, even though they are cheap, raise our blood sugar quickly. It is a lot of work to manage your diet when you have diabetes. When I can't eat properly I get dizzy, headaches and I may shake all over and have to lie down immediately. My vision gets very blurry and it is hard to see anything because I get black spots in front of my eyes. I have cataracts and glaucoma that are a result of my diabetes, as well as arthritis, which is also made much worse by my diabetes.

0920

"When I shop at supermarkets, I buy from the 'seconds rack,' where the vegetables are cheaper because they are not quite as fresh. If I can get a ride, I go to the Chinese vegetable markets because they are more affordable. Even though I live in rent-geared-to-income housing so I don't have to use any of my food money to pay rent, I still struggle when it comes to my groceries and other basic needs. Sometimes I go and stay with my

daughter when my food money runs out at the end of the month. I don't know how people without children manage. The food bank near me does not have fresh food. The food it has is very bad for diabetes. I do not drink or smoke and I still find it very hard to afford my basic needs each month. Each week, I spend \$25 on incontinence supplies. Needles for my blood tests aren't covered so that is another cost I must absorb.

"The subsidy I get each month is very small"—by the way, elsewhere in the letter, it says it's \$80 a month. "It is difficult enough to live in dignity when you live on a disability. It will be much harder if the government gets rid of this supplement."

But in fact, that's exactly what this government has done. They are getting rid of the special diet supplement. This woman, who suffers from diabetes, is going to suffer in the long term, because I've read what the government has to say—and I see my friend from Brant shaking his head. I see what the government is saying, because they're going to provide it only for "severe" cases—read the budget speech—severe cases only. I doubt very much that this woman is a severe case. I can see full well what is going to happen to her diabetes, and I can see full well what is going to happen when this government finishes the special diet supplement.

I would like to just conclude, in the last minute, and talk about the special diet supplement. It is one of the meanest, cruellest things I have ever seen a government do: getting rid of a diet supplement and putting people at risk and full of fear because nobody understands what this government is going to do in the weeks and months ahead.

When you phone up, as we have—and I trust the member from Brantford has phoned up his local ODSP office as well—and ask them, "When is the diet supplement ending?" you will get somebody on the end who says, "We don't know. We haven't been instructed." "Well, how much is going to be ending, and when can people expect their last payment?" "We don't know. The government hasn't instructed us when to do that."

When you ask in the House, to the minister, "When is the diet supplement going to end?" she says, "I don't know." I think she's waiting to see the special report at the end of the month by the hand-picked Liberal panel, and nothing is there.

But I will tell you that when you get rid of the special diet supplement, which 160,000 people in this province rely upon in order to be healthy, there are going to be casualties. There are going to be people who suffer, and the government has not made any commitment, in removing it and putting it into the health department, that they will fund it in any way near the same.

I have to say, this is a disappointing budget to me, at least in these three areas and others as well, and I ask the government to rethink their wrong-headed policies.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's always very enjoyable to listen to the member for East York—the last mayor of



East York, I believe, before he was honoured with election to this fine chamber.

I always appreciate the passion with which he speaks on the issues that matter so much to him and his constituency, and the way that he stands up for the people who he sees being ignored by the government. We don't always agree on matters of principle or philosophy or politics, but I certainly do admire the way that he brings those issues to the House.

He talked a lot about how one of the challenges for him and for all of us is when the government fails to live up to the commitments that it makes. When you start something, when you start something in motion, it forces something else or it gets something else rolling in motion. When the government says something or does something, people react to it. It's not a static world. When people react to those things, they make commitments as a result of government commitments. What happens then is, when government pulls the rug out from under those people who have made those commitments, the challenges that were large before become insurmountable.

That is why we have always believed on this side of the House that when you make a commitment, you have to follow through. The other day, the Premier was talking about how important it is to keep his word. All across the province of Ontario every day, people are reminding this Premier that he has to learn how to keep his word.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** For the sake of Hansard, I'm the member from Brant not Brantford, so I have to remember—

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I did say that.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** He said it the first time, and then the second time he said "the member from Brantford." He does know that I represent Brantford, Brant, Six Nations and the Mississaugas of the New Credit. But he also knows that I realize that he is the member from Beaches—with an "S"—East York, not Beach-East York, as we had that debate before.

He engaged me in my comments about shaking my head, so I will describe shaking my head. I was saying no because he never touched on, inside of the budget, the fact that in 2001, the budget for the special diet was \$6 million, and today it's \$250 million. I'm wondering if he could comment on whether or not he believes that all of the people that he said are seriously in need of all of that special diet budget, from \$6 million to \$250 million—can you explain to me some of the clinics that were run on how to have people get that? I'd like to hear that.

As pointed out in the budget, there's going to be a new form of having this special diet accounted for by medical doctors who will analyze to ensure that everyone who deserves to get it will get it. The circumstance which he describes is that if this person is in the medical need that they deserve, they will be getting that special diet. If they need that special diet for their health purposes, they're going to get it.

If he can tell me how a budget can go from \$6 million to \$250 million in that period of time, what kind of

restraint, what kind of sustaining can we do with that kind of budget. That is only that special budget inside of the ODSP that he's talking about. Maybe he can explain to us exactly how that happened and where that came from, and maybe we can get to the bottom of this. I know both of us would agree that people who have those health needs will get them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York for his very careful analysis of the budget before us.

I want to focus particularly on his reference to the cuts that were made to probably one of the most important budgets in this province, namely the Metrolinx budget, to which this government had committed some \$9.3 billion of resources and then mandated Metrolinx to do transportation and transit planning for the greater Toronto and Hamilton areas. Many of us read with interest the many announcements that this government made about the billions of dollars that would be committed to transportation and transit projects that were begun as a result of that.

Then to see in this budget \$4 billion cut from that budget—although it's characterized by the Premier and by the Minister of Transportation as simply a deferral, we cannot afford to defer any longer the work that has to be done to bring our transit up to speed, if I can use that term, in this province, particularly when in the same budget, what we saw was a confirmation of an additional \$7 billion to essentially subsidize a behind-the-scenes-negotiated contract with an offshore company, the Samsung company, that we question will bring any benefit to the province of Ontario. It's about wrong priority setting, and that's the issue that we have before us: a government that fails to see what the real priorities are in the province of Ontario.

0930

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to rise today, just for a short time, to speak about the budget. I do want to thank the member from Beaches–East York for his comments. I really do feel that this budget was a budget for its time. It's a very balanced approach. It speaks to jobs. It speaks to economic growth. It speaks to an investment in the people of Ontario.

That's one of the things that I want to talk about for just a minute. I look at the retraining dollars. I know how difficult it is in a community when you lose a large employer. I can tell you, what I'm hearing from my constituents is how much they appreciate the Second Career training. It really does make a difference. It really does give them an opportunity to refocus and to have the resources to move into another career. So by making an investment back into the career training, it really does help the people of Ontario to transform to the new economy.

Then, the investment in full-day learning: For a representative from a rural area like myself, child care is a



problem, it's very difficult, so making an investment in full-day learning really does give our rural children help. It gives them the opportunity to be much more advanced when they go into school. It's a difficult curriculum, and they have so much to learn. So anything we can do to help our children with assistance through full-day learning really does give them the ability to have much greater resources to deal with a very difficult curriculum.

Just in the few seconds I have left: When I see the members stand in the House and talk about infrastructure—especially from the other side of the House—and I look at the insignificant amounts that they ever spent on infrastructure, the voices—I don't think they ever heard them: \$32 billion—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The honourable member from Beaches–East York has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you to my colleagues from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Brant, Newmarket–Aurora and the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture, I thank you for your comments, but I didn't speak about any of the things that you commented on, so I don't know. I guess you just wanted your two minutes.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I thank you. He is absolutely right: People react to commitments, and people expect the commitments to be kept. The people of Toronto, particularly, have reacted to the commitments on Metrolinx with some considerable anticipation. There is no doubt there is palpable disappointment throughout our city today, when that has been delayed or perhaps reduced forever.

In terms of the member from Newmarket–Aurora, he too is absolutely right: The whole issue around Metrolinx cannot be deferred. The government has, in choosing other priorities, not done justice to the people of this city.

I saved most of my comments to the member from Brant: This is entirely the government attitude. What he said today is entirely the government attitude: that this is an abused system and that the people are abusing the system. This is not in fact the reality. In order to get a special diet allowance, you are required to have a letter from a doctor. You are required to go to the doctor and have the doctor tick off the boxes, and it is in fact vetted by people who work within the bureaucracy. If you've ever tried to help anyone get a special diet allowance, you will know how difficult it is, and that many people are unable to get it. Do people aspire to get some additional money? It is no wonder they aspire to get it, when the maximum you're allowed is the \$1,003 a month when you're on ODSP as a single person. Then, it is impossible to eat unless you get a special diet allowance. That's why they go out to get it, and they need it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm delighted to stand up and speak on the budget motion. It's important to enter the debate, and I've been listening to many different speakers from both sides of the House talking about this budget.

We are facing a difficult time that's not like five years ago or 10 years ago, when we had the privilege of having

a lot of jobs, a surplus budget and a strong economy. As you know, for the last two years the province of Ontario, the nation of Canada and the whole world have faced tough economic times. Our partner, our neighbour to the south, had a huge economic meltdown. As you and many people in this province know, Mr. Speaker, they are our strong partner in trade, so when they face difficulties, no doubt it's going to affect us, positively and negatively. For a long time, we know that those traditional jobs we have in the province of Ontario would exist in the future due to the progress of the technology. That's why we are facing a difficult time, and I believe we have to work together to pass that difficult time.

Nous rencontrons un temps économiquement difficile, et nous devons travailler ensemble pour surmonter ce temps difficile.

That's what we're all about in this province: working together to pass difficult times in order to restore our economy and to find jobs for the people who live in this beautiful province.

That's why we put a lot of emphasis on education since we got elected in 2003. We know that education is the most important and most fundamental element in order to build a strong economy, in order to build a strong future for the people of this province. That's why our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, put a lot of emphasis on early childhood education. Building the colleges and universities across this province allows our students to be educated, to learn and to be able to compete locally, provincially and globally.

That's why, when the federal government neglected their responsibility for child care in this province, our province came with \$63 million in this budget to support our child care spaces across this province, because we know it's fundamentally important for many families across the province of Ontario to see their kids go to a safe place to be looked after when they go to work.

It's important to us to create a chance for many families who want to work. We thought the most important thing was to create full-day early learning. I think it's a very important step toward a brighter future and a stronger future for our kids, for our families and for our province. That's why I believe that this proposal being debated right now in committee—we listened to many different deputations from stakeholders, school boards, teachers, parents, families and child care providers who came and voiced their concerns and support about this important step toward full-day early learning for almost 35,000 students in 600 schools across the province of Ontario, which I think is a very important step. Hopefully, if this bill passes in this House, we'll see 35,000 students entering school in September. The benefit of this important step would be at 600 schools across this beautiful province.

I know we face a lot of difficulties. We know it's important to educate our people and to invest in colleges and universities. That's why more than \$310 million in this budget is going to colleges and universities, to open them up for our bright students to be educated, to be able



to study and learn, and to obtain good skills to be able to fight globally and nationally to find a good job.

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We know the importance of our colleges and universities. I get the chance, every once in a while, to visit different nations. Every single time, when I go to those nations, I go to the colleges and universities to see what their education is all about. Do you know the first thing I hear? "We want to come to Canada to study. We want to come to Canada to learn," because they know that we have a good—the best—education system on the whole globe. That's why it's important to invest in the colleges and universities: to open our capacity to both host our domestic students and allow students from around the globe to come to Canada to study, to learn about our education; to give them the tools they need to be successful in their nations.

I think this is important for our economy. When we open our schools to foreign students, it doesn't just mean that we're going to obtain students who come to this province. We will also get friends who, when they get good jobs in government or whatever they do, will have a good connection with Canada and will start business and trade with Canada. So I think this is an incredible approach—and the right approach—toward a brighter future for this province and this nation.

Before this budget was announced, I had the chance, like many others in this chamber, to be lobbied and to receive many different requests from different stakeholders, whether in health care, education or infrastructure. Many different elements of our society came to us and asked us to pay attention to our investments. They asked us to maintain the services we have in Ontario. So when this budget came, I was so happy because this budget creates a balance between what we are facing as a government, as a nation, and our responsibilities as a province toward our people: toward health care, education, infrastructure and our children. This budget came as a result of responsibility.

It is a creative engine of economics that came to the people of Ontario and told them, "Despite our difficulties, we're going to continue our investments in health care and maintain it in the public domain; keep it open and accessible to all." This budget told the people who want to go to our colleges and universities, be educated and obtain special skills, "The universities and colleges will be open for you if you are ready, technically and scientifically, to enter those schools." We also told the people of Ontario, "We want to share your knowledge and skills with the rest of the world. We're going to invite students from across the globe to come to Ontario. We're going to increase our international students by 50%." I thought that was a very important step toward opening up Ontario for business and education for the whole globe.

This budget came to tell people, tell families, "Yes, we'll support you by providing child care for your kids." We also said to the people, "Full-day learning is coming up in September"—hopefully, if this bill passes in the

House—"to host 35,000 students in 600 schools across the province of Ontario."

We also maintain our commitment toward the infrastructure which many different communities across Ontario enjoy. I think it's a great investment, because when I go to London on Highway 401 or enter my city of London, Ontario, I see infrastructure everywhere: people building bridges, roads, parks, schools and colleges. Everything is taking place, in every community across Ontario, as a result of our investment of \$32 billion, which went to infrastructure for the next two years to tell the people of Ontario, "Yes, we are here. We'll update your infrastructure and stimulate the economy by investing in your community, allowing people to find jobs and allowing factories to produce more products." This is our commitment to the people of Ontario: not just in education, not just in health care, but also infrastructure.

The world is not as we experienced in the past. It is becoming more complicated and sophisticated. Technology is progressing on a daily basis. As you know, if you buy a computer today, the next day it will be obsolete because more advanced computers are coming. If we buy a car today, in a month or two or a year our car also becomes obsolete. It gets old because of technology passing us on a daily basis.

That's why we have to invest in research and innovation. We have to continue our movement toward providing our community, our province, with a bright future and with the skills we need, because we cannot succeed in the future without updating ourselves on a regular basis, without educating our students to maintain our prosperity and our structure in this province.

With Open Ontario, we can share our technology with the whole world, especially the green technologies, purifications for our systems, which many people in this province are talking about.

Water is very important for communities across the globe. In this province, we enjoy a big wealth of water. As you know, we're surrounded by five huge lakes. We have the biggest reservoir of fresh water around the globe, even though we have the best technology to purify our water. This technology is going to be a very important element to stimulate our economy and allow people from every part of the globe to come to Ontario, to learn from us and to buy our technology.

When I speak about water technology, I cannot help speaking about London, especially about two important, big companies that have proven themselves over the years. Purifics, a company I've spoken about many times, has incredible technology. They have the ability to purify water and air. They had the chance to get a contract with NASA one time to purify the water and the air for the people who go to the moon. So this technology has existed in London for many years. We also have a great company called Trojan Technologies, which gets the chance to get contracts with many different nations to treat their water systems, their sewer systems, and purify their drinking water. Those technologies are important not just for Canadians, but for every nation around the globe.



That's why when we open Ontario for business, when we open Ontario for education, when we open Ontario for health care, we're telling people, "Yes, we're open for you. Come share with us our technology, our knowledge." It's important in this day and age to share because we are in a small global village. Everybody can know what's going on from one end of the world to the other within a second. That's why we cannot live in isolation now. We cannot live alone. We have to share. We have to work together. Sharing and working together is going to create an economic engine for us as a province and give us the ability to maintain our prosperity.

Our government works very hard to protect the vulnerable people among us because we believe strongly that it's our responsibility to look after our vulnerable people, our sick people, our children, our disabled, our people who for some reason are not able to function in this life. We believe strongly that we cannot do it alone. In order to grow and prosper, we all have to work collectively in this province. The working poor among us need our support and a small lift to give them the ability to walk with us and to walk with the rest of the province of Ontario. That's our commitment. Notre gouvernement a travaillé dur pour protéger les gens vulnérables, assurant une bonne éducation et les soins médicaux nécessaires. Everyone needs medical support and medical assistance, and it's our obligation to give it to them and to support every person who lives in the province of Ontario.

This budget came to speak to this reality. It came as a result of the difficult time all of us are facing in this province—instead of standing up and hitting each other and accusing each other, from one side to the other. We can do that for political gain, but do you know what the most important thing is for leadership? To speak the truth and be able to support the move we are taking as a government to reduce and eradicate poverty, to fix our economy and, in the meantime, to create jobs for people who are looking for jobs in the province of Ontario.

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When the financial situation hit this province, we didn't panic as a government. We took the right approach.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, yeah?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** We took the right approach. What did we do? We created Second Career, and the Honourable Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities announced yesterday in those House about 28,000 people being trained and retrained across the province of Ontario, and most of them have obtained jobs they love, jobs they trained for. This is a responsible government. Also in this budget we have spots for 30,000 more to be retrained in order to find new jobs.

Our responsibility, as I mentioned, because the economy changed and the technology changed, is also to update ourselves. Some of those companies, some of those factories, some of those jobs are not going to come back. We've lost them; they're not coming back again. Do you know why? Because those are part of the past. Those traditional jobs are gone and are not going to come back. Therefore, our responsibility as a government is to create

an environment for people to be retrained, to find new jobs in their new domain, in a new technology, in a new life. That's why Second Career is going to play a pivotal role to retrain 30,000 workers who lost jobs that will never exist in the future because they're part of the past.

This is a responsible government. That's why we come into this place and speak on a regular basis, to convince the opposite side to come in our direction, and to tell the people of Ontario about our responsibility as a government to continue our investment in education, health care and infrastructure, and in the meantime look after balancing the books and balancing the budget, because we don't want to mortgage our kids. We don't want to mortgage our generations: our responsibility to spend and our responsibility to invest, and in the meantime, our responsibility to make sure our budget and our books will be balanced in the future.

That's the approach we're taking as a government. This approach, I think, will mean a lot to many people across this province. We have 13 million people. We have millions of workers across this province looking to us, as the government, to create an opportunity for them, to create jobs, to create opportunities to find jobs.

When we take this approach, we think on a regular basis about our people, our workers, our seniors, our children and our families, because it's our responsibility. As a result of our measures, the economy is progressing and doing a lot better. I was listening to CBC yesterday and today, and I guess our productivity is increasing and doing excellent. I get pleased and happy when I hear that GM rehired 700 people. Also, CAMI will have a second shift and Alliston is hiring people. In Woodstock, the Toyota plant announced a couple of weeks ago that 800 new jobs are going to be opened. All these jobs are coming back to the province of Ontario because we provide the environment for them. They can prosper, and they can provide good work.

That's why people from across the globe want to come to Canada to study, to learn and to open companies and factories. It's good for us as a province, good for us as a government and good for us as communities across the province, because we cannot maintain our tax base without jobs. We cannot maintain our infrastructure without good working people across the province, without collecting taxes from many good men and women who work on a daily basis to provide for themselves and provide for us as a government, as a community and as a province.

That's why I'm standing in my place, on behalf of my constituents of London-Fanshawe, to support the budget we produced in this House a week ago, and telling the people of Ontario that we're going to continue working for you, because it's our obligation and duty to support you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I listened attentively, as I always do when members of the government speak, and particularly the member from London-Fanshawe. I've got to tell you: Had my only involvement in listening to



what has been said about this budget been the address from the member from London—Fanshawe, I would just say, “Mail in my ballot for McGuinty for the rest of my life. Oh, my goodness gracious, this has to be the greatest budget from the greatest government in the history of mankind.”

*Applause.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, they’re going to report that in the partial Hansard, I know. I’ll correct it; don’t worry.

*Interruption.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Get that phone: That’s somebody calling me to say, “I listened to it, and I think it’s nothing but a load of you-know-what.” But answer that phone: It could be the Premier himself saying, “I wouldn’t even vote for me.”

Anyway, if you listen to the whole budget and you actually understand what’s being done and not being done, you’ve got to ask yourself: Are we only getting half of the story? I didn’t hear him mention the \$21.3-billion deficit. I didn’t hear him mention that his government is going to double—that’s right; double—the debt of this province by 2012-13, an albatross around the neck of every man, woman and child in this province, and for those who are children today, they’re going to be the ones who are forced to deal with that.

As every prognosticator worth an ounce of salt says, interest rates are going up. What is going to happen to the cost of servicing that debt? We didn’t hear that from the member from London—Fanshawe. They need to be telling both sides of the story.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I was really looking forward to getting a chance to respond to some of the comments because I think this member lives with what they call rose-coloured glasses. If you listen to the speech by the member, as my friend from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke said, there has never been a budget so great that hasn’t gone as far and did so much for so few people. You would think that he’s Winston Churchill, for God’s sake.

I’ve got to say, I acknowledge that every government does some good. Every government that has sat in this House has tried to do the right thing. But the tone of this particular speech, I believe, was way over the top when it comes to the rose-coloured look at what goes on.

I just use one example. In his speech, he talks about how this government does things in a measured way; they don’t panic whatsoever. Well, I’ve been watching this government as it has been developing its policies on the Far North, and up until the throne speech, as a result of legislation that they have before this House, they had a position that 50% of the territory in the Far North would be protected in perpetuity from any development, including the lands of the Ring of Fire—or at least some of them. All of a sudden, in the throne speech—because the government recognizes that they’ve got a political problem in northern Ontario in places like Sudbury, Timmins,

Thunder Bay and others, where the government is not seen too well because of its inaction on the economic front—“Ho, the Ring of Fire: Let ’er rip. It’s going to happen tomorrow; it’s coming to a neighbourhood near you.” If that isn’t panic, my friends, I don’t know what is. So I say to my friend across the way, I think a measured response to the budget would have been a far more interesting one.

To say that you’re working with all people in order to deal with the economic problems of this province—go talk to the workers at Siemens. Go talk to the workers at Xstrata. Go talk to the workers at Vale Inco in Sudbury, who have been on a picket line for nine months. I can tell you, people don’t feel as if this government is working with them in order to meet the challenges that this province faces and the jobs that they’re about to lose.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I too listened very carefully to the comments from my colleague from London—Fanshawe. It’s interesting: During these discussions about budget, there’s give and take on both sides, but there are some interesting statistics that I just want to quote this morning, and I think the member from London—Fanshawe touched upon them this morning. What is happening? The finance section of this morning’s Toronto Star says, “The Canadian dollar rose more than one third of a cent Wednesday after the ... report from Statistics Canada showed” that the nation’s economy, led by manufacturing and mining, are making healthy gains in January.

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What they’re saying on the GDP is, “It’s the fifth-straight monthly gain—and the biggest one month gain since December, 2006. Economists had been expecting GDP to rise by 0.5 per cent.

“‘We’re seeing a remarkable resilience and recovery up to now in the Canadian economy,’ said Craig Wright, chief economist for RBC Economics.

“‘December was a strong finish and January is off to a strong start. That adds up to a strong first quarter,’ on the heels of strong fourth-quarter growth.

So there’s no question there are still many challenges out there, but we are seeing very positive signs that the economy is starting to move in the right direction.

I also note that in today’s Toronto Star we hear about the challenges, I believe, in Welland, Ontario. A small article on page B5 indicates that Lakeside Steel, which is located in the wonderful community of Welland, Ontario, is about to add new shifts because of new demands for the product that they are producing.

My friend from London—Fanshawe’s riding is now the home of Trojan Technologies, which is the standard for water and waste water municipal operation across Ontario, to use that technology that’s state-of-the-art, and we welcome that he is so positive about developments in London and area.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I always find the member from London—Fanshawe to be nothing but supportive of his



government, and rightfully so. But it's our job to provide some balance to what is being said. There are some good provisions in this budget. The fact that there is a recognition to some degree of some of the social costs of the economic downturn and the fact that there are some very minor supports in this budget for some of the vulnerable people in our province are indeed positive.

But here is my concern: This government, this year, admits it will spend some \$23 billion more than it takes in. That is a deficit. Try that at home, spending so much more every year than you're taking in. That's the definition of a deficit.

It will continue to do that for another eight years, which means that by the time we reach 2013, this government will have doubled the debt of this province from the time it took office in 2003. It's a matter of responsible government. This government has shown none of that. It has spent. It is taxing. At the end of the day, they continue to talk about things at the 30,000-foot level, in terms of billions of dollars. What they are not talking about is how individuals and businesses across this province are hurting as a result of their mismanagement. It's our responsibility to point that out.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for London–Fanshawe has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I want to thank all the members who spoke in response to my speech.

I want to say to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and also to the member from Newmarket–Aurora, yes, we had the chance not to spend and not to create a deficit. But what would be the result of that? We're not going to stimulate our economy. We're not going to create jobs. Our roads, our bridges, our infrastructure, our hospitals and our recreation facilities, all of it would be gone. That's why we took that road. We know we're going to create a deficit as a result of our actions, but we thought it was important to continue to invest in our infrastructure because our infrastructure needs investment badly.

Also, it's the best way to stimulate our economy. As the member from Peterborough outlined and mentioned, as a result of our measures, the economy is progressing, and our productivity is growing on a regular basis. All the indications from CIBC to TD Canada Trust and all the economic experts in this province say about our strategy that it's the best approach and the best strategy, and it's the only way to stimulate our economy.

To the member from Timmins–James Bay, I listened to you, and I want to say something very important. We're not panicked. That's why we continue to invest in our infrastructure. We continue our commitment to the people of Ontario. In the meantime, we know the north is facing difficult times. That's why in this budget there was a huge section and also a huge element to support the people in the north, because we know on this side of the House it's important that the province of Ontario, from the north to the west to the east and Toronto, all work together to create and maintain that engine which feeds the province of Ontario and the whole nation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** A pleasure to join the debate and always a pleasure to follow my friend from London–Fanshawe. I didn't get to finish about his speech, but I understand a little better now. When I was looking at the headlines from the newspaper, I realized why he was going on like he was about the budget. I had forgotten in fact, Mr. Speaker, that it was April Fool's Day and perhaps he's just telling us his usual stories and not really concerning himself with the facts. So that could be the issue that's affecting—

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I'm using your other quote.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You like the other one better, eh? Yeah, I know that. I know that Mr. Levac will be sending that out in his householder to my riding.

Let's start talking about the real issues in the budget and where the government failed—and I realize I'm on a short clock here today, which is unfortunate because I'd like to have more time. Perhaps we can have a unanimous consent motion or something.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** We'll see what we can do.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yeah, I understand that. But let's talk about what the government failed to do.

I know the member for Peterborough was talking about some good economic news across Canada. Perhaps he was talking about some of the good work the Harper government has been doing, but the job situation in Ontario is, quite frankly, desperate—the highest unemployment rate in the country. In this budget, the government failed to take on the responsibility for any real meaningful job creation program.

Our leader, Tim Hudak, put out our 10-point plan called 10for2010.ca, which speaks about 10 different ways we could actually help the economy and create jobs today. I'll just touch on a couple of them here.

Suspend the new payroll tax on new jobs: When an employer hires somebody, if they were able to be freed of the burden of the employee tax for a period in that transition period, they'd create more jobs. They'll be able to hire more people because that cost will be lifted from that employer.

Another thing that Tim Hudak talked about was killing red tape and regulations. This government is a red tape machine, a regulatory machine—I should say “regime.” They love to create obstacles to business so that they can create more empires for bureaucrats. That is how this government works. That's why the best job program in this government has been to get a job in the government, because they love to hire people who are paid for out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Another one we talked about was a suspension of the land transfer tax. One of the dreams in this country and in this province, indeed, is for people to own their own home. A suspension of the land transfer tax, which would average the savings of \$3,000, would encourage home ownership. That is something that all people aspire to, and for those who are in that position, this would make it that much more affordable and would be a significant



boon to the construction industry at a time when the economy is challenged, to say the least.

I want to challenge the government—to use that word again—on some of the things they've been talking about. The finance minister made this sound like it was some amazing—you know, the Premier was going on about fun with numbers. If you want to talk about fun with numbers, we'll talk about some numbers here. The finance minister, in this speech—and I kind of thought to myself, “Do you even know what you're saying here?” He was talking about the \$32-billion infrastructure investment and saying what a great effect it had. We recognize that infrastructure needs to be built in this province, but he used the quote from the Conference Board of Canada, saying that the \$32-billion investment had a 1% impact on the GDP, and he sold that as something tremendous.

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The GDP of Ontario is around \$600 billion. A 1% impact on that is, of course, \$6 billion. So if you make a \$32-billion investment and it has a \$6-billion effect, I think you can all see where we're going here. But what they were trying to purport to the public was somehow that this had a great return on investment. No, it didn't have a great return on investment. It had its impacts, and many of them were positive, but don't try and sell something as something that isn't. What it was not was a return on investment. But those are the kinds of games that they play with the numbers, and that is what Minister Duncan was doing in the budget speech.

You would have to have a 5% impact on the GDP for \$32 billion to have even been a wash. So I think it's important that the government understands that you should not be going out there and trying to deceive people with having fun with numbers.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order. I'd just ask the honourable member to be careful with his language. You don't want to be accusing the government of some of that stuff.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** “Deceptive” and “deceitful” are over the line.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Understood, Mr. Speaker, and I'll do my best to be careful. I appreciate the warning.

Let's talk about the Second Career program. They're bragging about the Second Career program, and we understand that you have to have some kind of a program to assist people in transition, but what you also have to have is—you can't just train people. They didn't train astronauts before they found the moon. You don't start training people for something that isn't there. You've got to have a plan; if you're going to train people, you also have to have a place to put them. So you're training people for jobs, but you have no jobs for them.

This government talks about making great investments, but there's no accountability. What should be absolutely tied to it are how many jobs we've actually created for those people that we're retraining, but that's not what they talk about. That's their fun with numbers and that's the messaging they like to get out there. They

just think that, “Somehow people are going to believe we're doing wonderful things.” But how sad for the person who gets retraining and then is told, “Your retraining dollars have dried up. The program is over. You're on your own, and we never said you would have a job. In fact, there are no jobs.” That's what's happening. We're retraining people but we have no place to send them to a job. Shame on the government.

Talk about accountability—on page 164 of the budget there's a short little note in there which translates to, “We made a promise to do a public review of the LHINs”—the local health integration networks—and on page 164: “No. We're not going to do that.” This is about accountability. Budgets are about accountability. They don't want to be accountable for the problems that they have created with their unaccountable LHINs. What does the Premier do? After telling everybody how you've got to keep your word, and he stood up in the House and said, “It's so important that if you make a deal, you stick with the deal; you keep your word.”

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Tell De Beers that.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yeah, tell De Beers that—a 15% surcharge, right; a diamond tax.

He made those comments in here. What about his word to the people who are paying their taxes dutifully every day on every paycheque who want to know whether a bureaucracy that was the creation of George Smitherman is actually paying dividends, is actually making health care more efficient or working better? According to all the numbers, we'd have to say that they're not working. If the government wants to dispute that—and they have every right to do so—then let's proceed with the review. Even their own member, the member from Niagara Falls, says this is a mess and they should be reviewed. He's in the paper this morning. I don't believe he is going to be on the Premier's dinner list this weekend. But a lot of people across Ontario are nodding their heads and saying, “Yes, Kim Craiton is actually standing up against his government, which is wrong for breaking their word and not proceeding with the review of the LHINs.” Your word is important, and I think the Premier has to understand that the people expect him to keep his word.

How much time have I got?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Just a couple of minutes.

**Ms. M. Aileen Carroll:** You should have been finished a long time ago.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member for Barrie says that I should have been finished a long time ago. I hate to disappoint her.

I just don't want to get too deeply into a thought without being able to finish it, and this one could take an hour.

The other thing that the member for London-Fanshawe never talked about was the doubling of the debt. The finance minister says we're going to eliminate the deficit in eight years, and then he's having a luncheon the other day and he says we could go faster. But his budget document will tell you that he's predicated that on pro-



gram spending not going up by more than 1.9% or 1.8% per year. Well, that has never happened under this government. They're not even close to that. This government, in seven years, has raised program spending over 70%. How do they think the public is going to believe for one second that they're going to hold program spending to under 2% in order to eliminate this deficit in eight years? They can't do it, and they don't want to do it; they just want to tell everybody they're going to do it, and they are wrong.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** It being just past 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we'll have question period.

*The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** It's my privilege to introduce the parents of one of the pages here, Torin Hills: his father, Trevor Hills, and his mother, Mary Hills, are in the members' gallery over here. I just wanted to welcome them to Queen's Park and to enjoy today's question period.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'd like to welcome two of my Etobicoke-Lakeshore constituents who are here at Queen's Park joining me today: Mr. Barry Horosko and Ms. Maureen Flanagan Pool. Both are active in the community. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It's a pleasure to welcome the Centennial journalism students visiting the Legislature under the auspices of the legislative press gallery and Ms. Blizzard. They're right behind you there. They include—I'd better put my glasses on for this—Alekses Nesterins, Kerry Prunskus, Ozman Omar and Vick Polatian.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'd like to welcome two of my constituents who came here today to watch the democratic process. They are in the west gallery. They are Bassam Abdullah and Khooler Abdullah.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** It's my privilege to introduce the president of my Steelworkers local. Rolf Gerstenberger is joining us from Hamilton, and retired member Paul Lane.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I'd like to welcome to the House today three individuals: Mr. Louis Louro, who is past president of the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals and a merchant here in Yorkville for the past 25 years; Mr. Carlos Teixeira, also a past president of the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals and DS Teixeira and Associates; and Mr. Gus Costa, a retired police officer as well as a paralegal who owns Global paralegal services. Welcome, gentlemen, to the House.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I notice that Connie Neilipovitz is with us again today, mother of our page Ben Neilipovitz from Thunder Bay—Superior North. Welcome again, Connie.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'd like to welcome Mayor Roger Sigouin along with Clerk Claude Laflamme, who were here early this morning for an 8:30 meeting with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, and soon

to be meeting with the Minister of Infrastructure, Mr. Duguid. I would like to welcome them to the assembly.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm delighted to welcome to the Legislature today the mother of page Leah Kelly. Loraine Kelly is with us today. Loraine is not only the mother of Leah, but she's a former staffer for Attorney General Ian Scott. Welcome, Loraine.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Vaughan and page Catia Marceau, to welcome her mother, Giulia Marceau, and her father, Stephan Marceau, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

As well, on behalf of the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, leader of the official opposition, and page Neale Taylor, I welcome his mother, Nancy Taylor, and his aunt Laura Kmety to the west members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Premier. The member for Niagara Falls is quoted as saying, "Here in my riding the LHIN has been tarnished by what's transpired over at the Niagara Health System." He's talking about the growth of executive salaries at the LHINs while you cut \$15 million from front-line care and closed emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne.

Now that your own caucus is joining the Ontario PCs in calling for a public review of your unaccountable, unelected, anonymous bureaucracies, will you stop breaking the law and call for a review of the LHINs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am delighted to have this opportunity to talk about some of the really exceptional things the LHINs are doing. As we've talked about at great length in the House, the role of the LHIN is really to integrate the services available within their boundaries for the people who live there. Their job is to knit together the health services that are available.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN for the work they've done. They've brokered an unprecedented level of involvement of primary care providers and specialists in local health planning. I look forward to the supplementary to talk about more of the accomplishments of the LHIN in Niagara region.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Clearly, Ontario patients and families don't agree with this government's decision to divert valuable health dollars away from front-line care and into the fat salaries of top bureaucrats and sole-sourced contracts at the LHINs. Neither does your own member, by the way, who says, "I believe in transparency. I don't have a problem with LHINs being reviewed now...."



The question is, why doesn't the Premier share his caucus member's commitment to transparency and accountability, and stop blocking a public review of these unelected, unaccountable health bureaucracies?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We welcome a review of the LHINs, and that will happen by members of all parties of this Legislature once the LHINs have achieved the full suite of services they will be providing in our communities.

The LHINs provide an invaluable service. I must say, I'm wondering now whether the members of the opposition actually understand the work that LHINs do. In the Central East region, for example, where the member for Whitby—Oshawa is from, here's just one example of the work they do: They announced funding for 32 supportive housing units in the Central East LHIN to help people living with addictions increase stability and security in their lives and to reduce pressure on hospital emergency rooms. That is just one example of the work that is done by LHINs in this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** We all know who's really making health care decisions in this province. The Premier's line that Queen's Park isn't involved in making them just isn't credible. Even the Minister of Health admitted that Premier McGuinty bowed to political pressure and injected \$15 million into Grace Hospital during the Toronto Centre by-election. You can see in the eyes of the McGuinty Liberal caucus that they know the public isn't buying what the Premier is saying, but only the member for Niagara Falls is willing to admit that the Premier has to stop protecting whatever it is he's hiding and take accountability for cutting health care and closing emergency rooms.

Are you cancelling the public review of the LHINs because you don't want to confirm that consulting contracts and bureaucrats' salaries are diverting money directly away from front-line health care?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Again, I'd like to invite the member opposite to come with me for a visit to the LHIN in her community. I think she will actually learn about the value of the LHINs.

The member opposite knows, although she doesn't really want to say it, that when we brought in that community voice in the decision-making around health care, we actually replaced two levels of health care: We had the district health councils, and we had the regional offices in the health department. What the member opposite wants to do is recentralize power for health right here at Queen's Park in Toronto, so that they can make the decisions they will need to make if they in fact do freeze spending on health care. That would mean cuts to service across the province. We do not want to do that.

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#### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Again, my question is to the Premier. Premier, you created the local health integration

networks in 2006. Since then, the number of senior bureaucrats at the LHINs who earn over \$100,000 has tripled.

Are you breaking the law and cancelling the public review of the LHINs so you don't have to account for cutting money from front-line service while bureaucrat salaries are ballooning?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think there's something in there about the sunshine list, and I want to say that we welcome transparency and accountability. In fact, there are 63,000 Ontarians—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I'd ask the honourable guests here to please remove the photographs. I'm going to have to ask that they be removed from the chamber. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I was saying about the sunshine list that we welcome transparency and accountability. We think it's important information for Ontarians to have and to consider.

There would be two additional facts that are important for them to consider as they review their sunshine list. Point number one: If we had taken inflation into account, 70% of the people who are on that list would not be there today. Secondly, we have expanded the sunshine list to cover off OPG and Hydro One employees who had been sheltered by the previous government. Employees in those two companies alone account for over 10,000 people on the sunshine list; that's about one in six. We believe in transparency and openness.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Ontario families know that millions of valuable health dollars are not going into the front-line care as they should. People haven't forgotten the money wasted on the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle or the latest slush fund for insiders and Liberal-friendly consultants at the LHINs.

Last year, Ontario families were in the worst depths of the recession, trying to make ends meet. How do you explain giving CEOs of the LHINs raises of \$15,000 each on average, while they were fighting to save their jobs and emergency rooms in their communities?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** With respect to LHINs and the sunshine list, the list this year went up by 19 people. I would note that the average salary has dropped. I would also note that the list would shrink by 60% had it been tied to inflation. Again, I would ask Ontarians to keep all of that in mind as they consider what has happened.

We've made a specific decision, notwithstanding the urging of the Conservative Party, to hold the line at \$100,000 when it comes to the sunshine list. We think that for the average Ontarian family, \$100,000 is a lot of money, so we will continue to uphold the sanctity of that commitment. We will also insist on ensuring that OPG and Hydro One employees are covered off even though the Conservative Party stands opposed to that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The only things growing faster than the sunshine list are the six-figure salaries of the



LHIN executives. This year alone, over \$17 million was diverted from front-line care to the salaries of Premier McGuinty's unelected, unaccountable health bureaucrats. That doesn't even include what's being handed out to consultants. The slush fund for consultants is attractive enough to have lured Barry Monaghan from his \$351,000-a-year post as CEO of the Toronto Central LHIN, but there is no sunshine list for consultants.

Premier, are you breaking the law and cancelling the public review of the LHINs so you won't have to account for the money meant for front-line care that's now being diverted to consultants?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We have been made privy to an ongoing and concerted effort on the part of the Conservative Party to demean LHINs and those who commit to working on behalf of better health care in their community. That is an approach that we do not accept, that we will not adopt.

We continue to believe that instead of putting representatives of the ministry in the community, it's better for the community itself to represent its own interests when it comes to determining the best way to make investments of public dollars. We just have a tremendous amount of faith in people in their communities. We have a tremendous amount of faith in our LHINs and, working together, we will ensure that we can continue to find ways to improve the quality of care that's available to our families in their communities.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Premier. Connie Harrison is a downtown Toronto resident who is here in the gallery today. Connie is a cancer survivor, and today she suffers from diabetes and high blood pressure. She barely gets enough money through her ODSP payment of \$710 a month. Because of her measly income, she counts on a \$72-a-month special diet allowance so she can afford the food she needs to manage her conditions.

I'm asking this question on Connie's behalf: Will he explain to her why his government is about to make her life much harder by scrapping the special diet allowance?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question; I really do. I think it's important for my honourable colleague to understand, as well as those who are receiving the special diet allowance—I'm not an expert when it comes to this particular matter. I'm not a doctor; I have not been trained in medicine, but it sounds to me like this particular individual would continue to benefit under the new nutritional supplement.

Our intention is to ensure that those who are in need of special support when it comes to their diet in fact receive that special support. The program as it exists right now is doing more than that, to the point where—when this started off I think it was costing us some \$6 million—it's up to \$250 million on an annual basis. They tell us it could rise up to \$750 million. That's three quarters of a billion dollars. We want to make sure we get the program

right; we want to make sure those who are entitled to receive this are in fact receiving it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Since the McGuinty government announced its intention to replace the special diet allowance, Connie has been living with fear and anxiety. She doesn't know when her allowance will be terminated or if it will be terminated, and she doesn't know how she will make ends meet if it is cut. Why is the Premier doing this to Connie and countless other vulnerable Ontarians like her who rely on the special diet allowance to stay healthy? Why haven't you announced concrete plans on exactly what you are going to do?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** This is a great question that is being asked by the member from the NDP. Yes, there is a lot of concern out there in the community, but what I can say is that there is a transition period. Nobody will be cut off before the next program is in place, I want to reassure everyone. This being said, not everyone on the program now will be transferred to the new program. Because this new program is a nutritional supplement program, it's going to be developed in consultation with our partners in the medical community and the Ministry of Health.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The minister has already said this will be for severe conditions, and it's already administered by the medical community. You have to get a doctor's letter to get the supplement today.

Connie isn't alone here today. Kyle Vose is a diabetic living with HIV. He's here in the audience as well. He is also worried about the cuts. So is Fiona Blair, who lives with post-traumatic stress disorder. Connie, Kyle and Fiona are just three of 170,000 Ontarians who rely on the special diet allowance to deal with their serious medical conditions.

I want the minister and/or the Premier to assure all of these Ontarians, each and every one of them, that they will not see a reduction in their benefits as a result of the cancellation of the allowance. Will the minister make that assurance?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** As I have explained, this new program will be developed in consultation with our partners in the poverty community and in the medical community, along with the Minister of Health. Will everyone who is receiving the special diet now be receiving it in the future? My answer is no.

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#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** We've just heard the minister, so back to the Premier. This government claims the special diet program is not meeting its objectives, but it provides not one iota of evidence: no report, no study, no analysis. Its own expert social assistance review panel says the



program shouldn't be cut, and they are not due to report until the end of this month.

Why is the government in such a rush to end the special diet allowance before it has been properly evaluated by your own panel?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that my honourable colleague is aware of the concerns that the auditor has expressed about this government program of ours. We think we have a responsibility not only to those individuals who are in need of special nutritional support and supplements, but we also have accountability to taxpayers to make sure that it is running as efficiently and effectively as it can.

On page 264 of the 2009 auditor's report—one passage—he says a doctor “diagnosed celiac disease in 99% of the applications” brought before him, “which we feel is unreasonably high given that the nationwide incidence of this disease is estimated at 1% of the population.” That's a legitimate concern. That's just one reason why we feel a sense of responsibility to review the program and to find a better replacement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** What the government has done is not a review, Mr. Premier. What the government has done is unilaterally cut this program in favour of some unannounced program in the future.

This government is desperate to save money—that's the real reason it's cancelling the special diet allowance—not by cutting six- and seven-figure salaries of hospital and government agency executives, but by slashing the benefits to Ontario's poorest and sickest citizens.

Why is the McGuinty government willing to balance the budget on the backs of struggling people like Connie, Kyle and Fiona, but not on its high-flying Liberal friends and big seven-figure earners?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** That's an interesting and exciting way to put it, but obviously I can't agree.

I think one of the responsibilities that we have, all of us, is to give expression to Ontarians at their best, and I think at their best they are kind, caring, considerate and compassionate. They also expect that their government will treat their hard-earned tax dollars respectfully.

What we're trying to do is strike the balance. We don't believe we have struck that balance in the best way possible with the existing program, so we're going to develop a successor program that strikes that balance, that ensures that through their government, the people of Ontario do lend a hand to those folks who need special help when it comes to their diet. But at the same time, they expect that we will be responsible when it comes to dealing with their money. That's what motivates this: We want to better strike that balance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** There are words to describe this government's actions. “Cruel” and “heartless” and “mean” come to mind.

Back in 2007, when this Premier was looking for votes, he said over and over and over again that reducing poverty was his top priority. But three years later, with-

out any consultation, his government is cutting a basic allowance that provides up to 30% of the income for hundreds of thousands of social assistance recipients struggling with medical conditions.

Will the Premier look at the people here today—Connie, Kyle, and Fiona—display some courage and immediately reverse his decision—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just would like to remind our guests that you are very welcome to observe but not participate in the proceedings.

Please finish.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Will the Premier display some courage and immediately reverse his decision to scrap the special diet allowance?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just want to remind my honourable colleague—I know that for purposes of simplicity, you want to pigeonhole and you want to caricature the government: They're either profligate spenders or hard-hearted and mean-spirited.

The fact is that we struggle to get that balance. The fact that we are continuing to move ahead with the Ontario child benefit, a program that wasn't there before and that will provide \$1,310 for our families when it's fully implemented, notwithstanding difficult economic times, I think speaks to where our heart is found. The fact that we've found permanent funding for 8,500 more child care spaces speaks to where our heart is. The fact that we are now determined to find a better program to help people who find themselves in difficult circumstances, who need additional support for their nutritional requirements, speaks again to where our heart is. But we've got to balance that with our responsibility to taxpayers to get this right.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, the sunshine list reveals that you have diverted over half a million dollars from the Hamilton Health Sciences budget to pay Ron Sapsford while the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle was happening right under his nose. You also poached \$300,000 from the University Health Network budget to pay your hand-picked climate change advisor Hugh MacLeod before he skipped out the back door when the Environmental Commissioner exposed that you weren't getting the results for the money.

Why do the McGuinty Liberals continue to rob hospital budgets to pay these bureaucrats' salaries when the money should be going to front-line care?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome the opportunity to talk about how pleased I was to see in the budget that we are continuing to increase support for our hospitals and for our health care sector.

There is a party represented by the member who asked the question that actually has in their platform the position of freezing funding for our hospitals. We know that means cutting services; there is no way around that.



What we are committed to doing is continuing to build on the work we have done over the first six and a half years, restoring the health care system. We are increasingly looking to improve quality and value, and the LHINs play a very important role in that process.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Minister, in my own riding, you know that 15 beds will close and 17 staff will be cut at Brockville General Hospital. Millions have been diverted from hospitals to pay the salaries of bureaucrats hand-picked by the Premier for his pet projects, some of whom are complicit in this government's biggest scandals and waste.

Take the \$506,000 that Premier McGuinty is robbing from the London Health Sciences Centre to pay Ken Deane. It's bad enough an assistant deputy minister is making over half a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment and be conscious of impugning any motive on another member.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I withdraw.

It's bad enough that an assistant deputy minister is making over half a million dollars, but Ken Deane approved untendered deals to Liberal consultants in the eHealth feeding frenzy.

Minister, why did the Premier block a public inquiry into eHealth and cancel the public review of the LHINs?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I have said many times now in this place, we are committed to a review of the LHINs; we are committed to an all-party review of the LHINs. We think that's an important part of improving how we deliver health care in this province.

The question is when is the right time to do that review. We think the right time to do that review is when the LHINs have achieved their full mandate and are actually doing what we had in mind when we set up the LHINs in the first place, and that is to include long-term-care homes. They will not actually be getting responsibility for long-term-care homes until later this summer. We want to give them time to take that responsibility and have a couple of years of experience with that responsibility before we take a good hard look at the act.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** A question to the Premier. Here are the facts about your hydro strategy in Ontario: Your smart meter program has meant higher bills for Toronto Hydro users and no reduction in power demand. Ontario Power Generation, operating an unaffordable nuclear fleet, is applying for a 9.6% increase for its portion of the bill.

Premier, at a time when Ontario residents are struggling to recover from the worst recession in a generation, you're giving them a lot of pain and very little gain. When are you actually going to make the deep conservation investments that are needed to make hydro affordable in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** So far, over 3.4 million smart meters have been installed across the province. That's a significant achievement, and there's more to come. I would think the honourable member, with his background, would recognize the importance of moving toward that culture of conservation. The time-of-use initiative will provide every resident in this province with that opportunity to engage in that movement. It's important. It's important that every Ontarian engage in conservation. It saves them money in the long run and it ensures that as they shift their use, they'll have opportunities to save. At the same time, it ensures that we don't have to build more nuclear capacity, that we don't have to build more supply. It just makes sense. I would have thought the member opposite, given his background on environmental issues, would understand that.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Well, if you spend a billion dollars on a program and it doesn't actually reduce consumption, then that doesn't help; that's a waste of public money.

But let's go on to another part of your program, executive salaries. Yesterday, we found out that former OPG CEO James Hankinson's salary—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I hope you're going to tie that in to the original question.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I am indeed, Mr. Speaker. We found out that his salary and bonus totalled over \$2.1 million. His successor, Tom Mitchell, is over a million. Hydro One CEO Laura Formosa earns \$978,000. That's not going to help hydro ratepayers or the environment. When are you going to help ratepayers and the environment by making the investments that we need in deep conservation and stop wasting money on these inflated salaries?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** One of the things that this government takes pride in is the fact that, prior to us coming into office, the sunshine list wasn't accessible for OPG employees and Hydro One. It's very important that we did that because it ensures that Ontarians have access to that kind of information. I think that's important. It's something we're very proud of. The person he was referring to is actually making less than his predecessor was.

Now, the Premier is absolutely right: To average Ontarians, \$100,000 is a sizable income. We understand that; we get that. Seventy per cent of these workers, as in all of government—and MEI is absolutely in line with that—would not have been on the sunshine list had there been inflationary pressures taken into consideration.

We think this is something all Ontarians should have access to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## PATIENT SAFETY

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, my constituents



have heard about the surgical errors uncovered in a Windsor hospital. We were relieved to hear that the hospital took the appropriate steps and launched a formal review, both of the incident and the doctor in question. The minister's decision to appoint three highly regarded physicians to investigate and report on issues related to the quality of care and treatment of patients at three hospitals in Windsor also helped to reassure my constituents.

I understand, coming out of that, the surgical safety checklist is known to prevent errors in the operating room. Could the minister please tell this House about the surgical safety checklist and if our hospitals will actually be using it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you for that very excellent question. I'm very happy to announce that the surgical safety checklist will be required for all operations in all hospitals in the province of Ontario starting today. The checklist is inspired by a pilot's checklist. It includes a mandatory review of pathology and biopsy results by the entire operating room team—that includes surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses—in the operating room before a patient is given the anaesthetic.

The results of a study published in a 2009 New England Journal of Medicine reported that consistent use of a checklist reduces the rates of death and complications associated with surgical care. A province-wide education program with a comprehensive toolkit was developed and delivered across the province. Starting July 30, they will—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm relieved to hear that the checklist will now be adopted by all Ontario hospitals. My constituents will be happy to hear that this additional step will be taken to keep them safe when they undergo surgery, because, as we know, when a patient is admitted to hospital the only thing on their mind is their own health, safety and well-being. Patients and families don't need the added burden of worrying about the possibility of things like hospital-acquired infections. In addition to minimizing the surgical errors, it's also important to minimize infections in hospitals.

Could the minister please tell this House what the government is doing to keep patients safe in Ontario hospitals?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That's another excellent question. Patient safety is a very high priority for this government, and we do have a plan to combat infectious diseases. We're turning expert advice into action. We've established a provincial infectious disease advisory committee for the best and most current advice on infectious diseases. We've created the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion to position Ontario as a world leader when it comes to public health.

We know that when you track it, you can improve it. It's the same principle we used to lower wait times. That's why we've made C. difficile outbreaks reportable to the public health units, and we're now seeing the lowest rates since we started reporting as a direct result of that reporting.

We're doing excellent work in this province to improve patient safety. Most recently our initiative is on hand hygiene compliance—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Premier. Tomorrow is the one-year anniversary of our colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo asking the first questions about untendered contracts at eHealth. For three quarters of 2009, the Premier knew about the money that was being wasted in the eHealth scandal. What's worse, he defended it. As the sunshine list now shows, the McGuinty Liberals actually paid handsome raises to the people overseeing the billion-dollar eHealth scandal.

Now that an eHealth-style scandal is emerging at some of the LHINs, Ontario patients need to know why the Premier is once again defending the waste of health care dollars on consultants, bureaucrats' salaries and insider perks.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We know that the future viability of health care in this province depends on us moving forward with electronic health records for the people of Ontario. So much of what we can do to improve quality and value for money depends on that foundation of eHealth. We're making important strides to get to where we need to be when it comes to electronic health. One of the initiatives I am most pleased about is an initiative around ePrescribing. We've got a pilot study that's under way right now. We're seeing the results when doctors can electronically prescribe. The prescription goes right to the pharmacy, and the patient can pick it up there at the pharmacy. We're seeing much better results and fewer errors being made. That's just one example of what we are doing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** It's not surprising that the Premier sidestepped the question, and the minister's answer was not reassuring. The Premier could not only take a page from the government of British Columbia on how to transfer HST tax collectors without paying \$25 million in severance bonuses, but he could also learn something from them about accountability. When British Columbia had its own eHealth scandal, the government referred the matter to the police, and they have now pressed charges. In Ontario, this Premier has done nothing to discipline those who blocked the auditor's investigation. He has not turned evidence over to the police to investigate, and he continues to block a public inquiry into who got rich from the millions that could have been going to front-line care.

Did the Premier cancel the public review of the LHINs for the same reason he has blocked a public inquiry into the eHealth scandal?



**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'd like to take the opportunity to talk a little bit more about what we're doing on eHealth, because it really is a critically important piece of our health care system. Four million Ontarians now have electronic medical records. Physicians are already participating. We are expanding that: By 2012, 10 million out of 13 million Ontarians will have electronic medical records. Primary care providers have embraced the technology, and we will support them as they move to electronic health records. It's critically important for health care in this province.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Yesterday revealed a new club: the \$700,000 club. This club is filled with hospital presidents and CEOs whose salaries have continued to grow by 7% in last year alone.

Does the Premier think that it is right for Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Welland, Thessalon, Picton, Cobourg, Burk's Falls, Oakville—and the list goes on—patients to be losing their health services while these CEOs, members of the \$700,000 club, are taking home skyrocketing salaries?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

1110

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We all, of course, understand the importance of having transparency when it comes to salaries. That's why the sunshine list is there: so that we can take a good, hard look at the salaries that are paid by the taxpayers. I think it's important to recognize that the number of hospital employees on the list did increase, but the average salary actually remains only \$90 more this year than last year.

We need to be able to attract competent people, we need to retain the health care providers we have here. I am concerned, however, about hospital CEO compensation. We will be introducing legislation that will make health care providers more accountable for quality in their institutions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I agree with you that the health care providers did not cash in on the \$700,000 club. Since the government took office, it is the hospital executives who saw their salaries increase by 40%, not the workers. The government can talk about the boards of directors of the hospitals and all this, but at the end of the day, every Ontarian knows that it is our tax dollars that are paying for this excess. It is clear that your priorities are wrong.

People in London are set to lose 14,000 hours of nursing care because of layoffs due to funding issues. Does the minister think it is right that patients are losing the care while top executives' salaries continue to balloon?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would like to assure the member opposite that I share her concern about hospital CEO compensation. I think Ontarians are concerned

about that as well, especially when so many of them are struggling to make ends meet. That is why we will be introducing legislation that will make those health care executives more accountable for improving the quality of the services in their institutions. We will link executive compensation to quality objectives to ensure that every dollar that we spend in health care does have the result of improving health care for people in this province.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, the great riding of Mississauga South is fortunate to be served by two outstanding school boards: the Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

As a parent of three children who have attended Catholic and public schools in Mississauga, I know first-hand about the high quality of education our students receive. However, when it comes to educating our kids, we should always strive to do better.

In a recent letter to the Mississauga News, PDSB chair Janet McDougald wrote about how our Peel schools are funded. She said that the students in the Peel public school system are the fourth-lowest funded in Ontario and that the funding gap has almost doubled in the past eight years.

Minister, why is per-pupil funding in Peel lower than in Ontario school boards?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** That's a very important question from the honourable member. I think it's important that I have the opportunity in this House, first of all, to identify that we recognize that in each board, in fact in each school community, the needs and demands of the students, the school and the community can vary.

We have a funding formula that, in large measure, provides funding to schools on a per-pupil basis, but there are other components that enable the government to flow dollars to schools to assist them to address some of the specific needs that they have within their school community. We have consulted with school boards, through the grants for student needs consultations, and I look forward in my supplementary to providing a little more information around some of the changes that we've made in the GSNs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Minister, in the same letter, Ms. McDougald suggests that your ministry is using outdated data to determine funding for Peel boards. In fact, she says that 1991 and 1996 census data is being used to allocate funding. This data is more than a decade old. In fact, since 2001, over 33,000 additional students are now being educated in Peel boards and in Peel schools. Many of these students are newcomers to Canada who don't speak English or French as their first language. They depend on programs like ESL to succeed, but my community is concerned that because old data is being used, these programs are not being adequately funded.



Will the Ministry of Education commit to using the 2006 census data and funding Peel boards accordingly?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** As I indicated in my first response, we have worked and consulted—in fact, the member for Guelph had consultations with stakeholders to understand how we can better support schools. The issue of current data was a very important one that was raised.

I am happy to be able to report to this House that in fact the GSNs that have been released for this year, particularly the learning opportunities grant portion that does consider census, have been updated and this component of the GSN will now consider the census data of 2006.

Now, for the school board of the honourable member that he has identified, that means that will increase their funding in the neighbourhood of 4% to 5%.

We thank the honourable member —

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is for the Premier. This week, I learned that a plant run by Crown Metal Packaging Canada in my riding of Thornhill, employing 159 people, will shut down in December. Crown Metal Packaging operates in 41 countries around the world, but this particular plant is shutting down because it is no longer competitive—their words. I'm told that it's the jurisdiction that makes it uncompetitive—their assessment.

Premier, when are you going to acknowledge your role in making Ontario so uncompetitive that we continue to expel jobs and investment?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I am pleased to respond to this question. First of all, we're very concerned if we hear that there is a company that is going to consider not employing people in Ontario, and we have great concern for the people who may have lost a job or will lose a job. We'd like the particulars of this particular company, because we'd like to talk to them.

What we have been doing for the last three successive budgets in a row is making our tax environment in Ontario one of the most competitive in North America. What we can share with you is some of the influence that our tax policy has had in savings for companies very much like this, in particular those that are in manufacturing, as it sounds as if this company is. So I would like to have the details and the contacts. This member knows I'd be happy to call that company.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** The facts speak for themselves. What the minister continues to fail to acknowledge is that high taxes, a massive deficit and soaring energy costs give companies like Crown Metal Packaging more than enough reason to pack up and move to cheaper jurisdictions.

The Premier shouldn't bother spending any money on polling to gauge the reaction to his budget; the closure of this plant is all the reaction that's required. There was nothing in this budget that would convince Crown Metal Packaging that it could afford to keep this plant open any longer.

No one said economic recovery was easy, Premier. I'd like to know why this government is making it that much harder for companies like Crown Metal Packaging and the 159 people who work there?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** The reality is that there have been many studies done, especially over the last few years as we've come through a world recession. That last one, the KPMG study, ranks Canada as the second-most competitive place in the world. That's our reality. This member also knows that the IBM global study ranked Ontario as the leading jurisdiction for foreign direct investment anywhere in North America two years in a row, even when those two years were 2008 and 2009, in the face of a world recession. Those are the facts.

What concerns us greatly is that there is one company that may consider moving; that's a company that we need to speak to. We need to explain that we've eliminated the capital tax as of July this year—also an initiative that that member opposite voted against. We've also eliminated the surtax for small business, an initiative that that member voted against, and all of the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. Hamilton-Niagara has taken another economic hit with the move of Lakeport beer operations to London. Our leader, Andrea Horwath, is in Hamilton this morning talking with the newest group of unemployed Hamilton workers who are facing extremely difficult times ahead. With the closure of Siemens a scant two weeks ago, this brings the total to over 700 more jobs lost in Hamilton-Niagara. Members of the government make faint claims of new jobs in the region, but I don't think a \$10.25 hourly minimum wage is going to sustain families who have relied on well-paying, permanent, full-time jobs. When will the McGuinty government's plan for good, well-paying jobs in Hamilton start?

1120

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I am very pleased to respond to this, because we too are very concerned when we hear news about Lakeport Brewery. We know that there is a history in Ontario of very terrific manufacturing, and that is a message we continue to send to the world. When we have communities like Hamilton that have been hard hit by the recession—as have other regions of Ontario which have been largely manufacturing-based—we're concerned about that. We're reaching out to these companies to see what we can do to be helpful.



With Siemens, the example that this member offers, we brought not only the CAW into our office to talk about future opportunities, but we're engaging Siemens directly about what opportunities they may have in the future for work right here in Ontario. We are reaching out to Lakeport as well. They've made a decision to move manufacturing outside of Ontario. We think there could be other opportunities and we're determined to see if we can—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** You may be reaching out, but they're all leaving town. The Globe and Mail Report on Business, on March 30, said, "The brewery's closure also delivers another blow to the labour market in Hamilton, which has seen massive"—I repeat, massive—"layoffs in some key industries." Hamilton suffers an 8.9% unemployment rate while Niagara region suffers an 11.5% unemployment rate.

Recently, the minister from Hamilton said that the closure is a blow to Hamilton and the province "will help in any way we can."

Rather than help in any way you can, I ask again: Where are the well-paying new jobs? What are the real numbers of the new jobs? Where is the McGuinty government's new job plan to get the Hamilton-Niagara economy back on track?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I think there is no question that the significant representation that Hamilton has, in particular in the cabinet and in caucus here on this side of the government—they have been tireless in their support of Hamilton.

We have been on the phone with leadership in Hamilton for a number of years, whether it's through community and transition support programs or—I don't know if the member participated in the economic summit of last year, which we supported on this side of the House, but that was another initiative that member opposite actually voted against. All of the infrastructure being built in Hamilton and in the Niagara region, tens of millions of dollars—every one of these initiatives is something that that member opposite voted against.

When we talk to these manufacturers around the world, we want them in Hamilton. It behooves this member opposite to be supportive of our initiatives while we try to help Hamilton when it—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. On December 18, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring April 2 to be World Autism Awareness Day. This UN resolution is one of only three official disease-specific United Nations days and is designed, obviously, to bring attention to the issue of autism spectrum disorder. This is an opportunity to raise awareness

about autism spectrum disorder and to encourage early diagnosis and early intervention. It's estimated that approximately 6% of people are diagnosed with ASD.

Minister, can you please tell this House what our government is doing to support children with autism spectrum disorder and their families?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank my friend the member for Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale for his advocacy on this important issue and for giving me the opportunity to speak to it today. I have had an opportunity, over the past many years, to meet with children with autism, their parents and service providers. I've listened and learned a great deal about the work that needs to be done to meet these kids' needs, and I want to thank those parents and children for sharing their experiences and stories with me.

We've made significant progress since 2003. More kids are getting support and we've broadened the range of services. We've removed the previous government's discriminatory age-six cut-off and almost quadrupled autism spending from \$44 million to almost \$165 million today. Now, almost 1,300 kids are getting IBI therapy and we have introduced a respite program which served almost 7,000 kids—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** Minister, outside of the traditional delivery of autism services, schools are increasingly dealing with cases of autism amongst their students. While it is crucial that we provide appropriate resources to those in need of services, we must also recognize the challenges that face these kids when they enter the school system. Upon entering the school system there are obstacles and challenges facing ASD students. Knowing the importance of integrating students with ASD in the educational system, what is our government doing to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** To the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak to the work that we have done with our partners to ensure that there is an appropriate transition. As a result of that, we have implemented the Connections for Students model. This model is a school-based transition team that is established approximately six months before a child prepares to enter the school and will be in place for six months after the child is in the school. School boards have been instructed that transition teams must be in place no later than the spring of this year.

I think it's also important that members of the Legislature note that we have been working since 2006 to provide more than 13,000—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is for the Minister of Health. A constituent of mine used to receive a monthly



B12 injection from a CCAC nurse in her home. She is a senior and she has been cut off. She has to find a friend or family member to take her, no matter the weather. She is 97 years old. One fall in an icy parking lot could put her in the hospital.

Minister, I cannot believe that cutting off a 97-year-old woman once a month will save you money overall. Do you believe it will?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think the member opposite is speaking to the value of home care, and we completely agree that providing care in-home is what we have to do. That is why we have dramatically increased funding in the home care sector. We have dramatically increased the number of people receiving care. We've taken off some of the rules that limited the amount of care people could receive.

I, of course, cannot speak to this particular case. I would be happy to look into it. But what I can tell you is that we remain committed to home care and we remain committed to an enhanced role in home care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I hear repeatedly from constituents and nurses in my riding of seniors losing their CCAC care. You know that seniors losing medical care at home will mean more of them ending up in the hospital. Every penny you save from home care will cost much more in dollars in the hospital. I cannot believe you are willing to risk someone's well-being by cutting corners on a budget.

Minister, why do you manage your ministry in silos?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think the member opposite just made the very best argument for the value of the local health integration networks. It is their job to break down those silos.

This government is committed to improving health care in this province. The party opposite is committed to cutting health care in this province. When they were in office, this is what they did: They cut home care and community health care funding by \$21.7 million in 1995-96 and \$38 million in 2000-01. Nursing visits decreased 22%, while homemaking services decreased 30%.

I could go on about the record. What I will commit to is that we remain committed to improving home care in this province. The party opposite is committed to cutting.

## CHILD CARE

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** A question to the Minister of Education. Minister, last week, in response to my question, you said you were listening very carefully to the deputations on Bill 242. As a result, you would know that many concerns have been expressed about the fact that the government has chosen to cherry-pick the full-day kindergarten program rather than implement the entire Pascal report. As a result, child care centres are facing a loss of revenue from the movement of the four- and five-year-olds to schools. This may force many centres to close. Many of them told us that, and you heard that.

What is the government going to do to support child care centres so that the kindergarten program doesn't result in fewer child care spaces for parents next year?

1130

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** What I can say to the honourable member right now is that I'm sure the honourable member appreciates that we have had second reading debate and we have heard the public presentations in committee, but we still have a good deal of work to do when we consider amendments that would be proposed and all of the information that we've heard at the committee level. We're still in the process of sifting through all of that.

What I can say is that we are absolutely committed to investing in our earliest learners. What we have told the people of Ontario and the parents of four- and five-year-old children is that we are looking to implement an integrated, full-day kindergarten program. That is the goal; that is what Bill 242 is all about.

I think it's always important, when we ask questions about what we're going to do, to remember—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You don't have much time. Clause-by-clause will happen next week. Amendments have to be submitted very soon. In order to ease the worry, my feeling is that you've got to present something.

I'm not sure whether you've listened carefully, because there's more: The fact that the government has chosen to implement only one component of the Pascal report has raised serious questions about the before- and after-school part of the early learning program.

How are school boards supposed to find qualified people to staff a stand-alone program to care for four- and five-year-olds for a few hours in the morning and a few hours in the afternoon? How are they going to do that?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, the honourable member would know that we have announced the first—almost 600 schools will have this program in place.

That's not all. We are taking a very measured approach. We've asked boards to work co-operatively with their coterminous boards and child care providers, because we understand that there are going to be some impacts.

With respect to the work that we are doing with Bill 242, I'm not going to presume to understand what the outcome will be of the very good work that is still under way on that bill. What I can say is that we have been listening very carefully to all of the people who have taken the time to bring their very best advice to us.

This is an important investment in our youngest learners. We are committed to building the strongest students in this province so that we can build the strongest economy in the world.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. It has come to my attention



through the media, and indeed from a number of constituents in Willowdale, that there is some very ugly stuff going on in the small mover business—some really nasty business practices. I understand that what some of these practices revolve around is involving extra charges for stuff not quoted in the original price to the consumers.

There are all sorts of variations of this scam, but here's just one, to give you the flavour: I've been advised that in some cases, moving companies are asking for extra money to remove the furniture from the back of the moving van once it has reached its destination. What they say is that that's not included in the original quoting price. They're just charging for moving from A to B, not to unload the stuff. Minister, what are we doing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** That was a great question. Thank you to the honourable member from Willowdale, who is a great advocate for consumer protection in his riding.

The ministry has a great deal of information to help Ontarians make informed decisions when choosing a moving company. It's important to help consumers to know their rights before entering into an agreement with a moving company, and we have some great tips for them.

First, the final cost cannot be more than 10% above the original estimate. Second, if the consumer agreement for the move took place in their home, you can cancel the agreement within 10 days of signing that contract. Thirdly, a mover cannot hold your goods to pressure you to renegotiate the price.

I urge any consumer—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm just appalled that this kind of activity is going on. I hear from seniors in Willowdale who are regularly getting ripped off on this. Obviously, the ministry must have had some knowledge that this kind of stuff was going on. There must be penalties to crack down and to impose on these unscrupulous companies.

Minister, what kind of charges can you levy against these bandits?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Again, that's a very good question, and I thank the member for that. The member is correct. In 2009, the ministry received over 230 inquiries and 109 written complaints about movers. Since 2008, the ministry has assisted in obtaining more than \$17,000 in refunds for consumers who have been mistreated by moving companies.

An individual who is convicted under the Consumer Protection Act, including unscrupulous movers, may receive a maximum sentence of two years less a day in jail and a maximum in fines of up to \$50,000. The Ministry of Consumer Services is here to help.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I ask all members to join me as we take this opportunity to thank this

wonderful group of pages for the hard work they've done on our behalf. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

I would welcome unanimous consent that we continue on next week.

#### GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On Tuesday, March 23, 2010, the member for Oshawa, Mr. Ouellette, rose on a point of order to indicate that an announcement made in the March 8 speech from the throne had circumvented the parliamentary process. Specifically, the member indicated that, despite the fact that Bill 242, which, according to the member, deals with all-day kindergarten, is still before the Legislature, the speech from the throne announced that starting this fall, full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds will begin in schools across our province. The government House leader, Ms. Smith, made a written submission on the point. On Thursday, March 25, 2010, the member rose again, this time on a point of privilege concerning the implementation of this program, and the government House leader responded.

Having had the opportunity to review the speech from the throne, our Hansard, the materials provided by the member from Oshawa, the written submission of the government House leader and the relevant precedents and authorities, I will now rule on the matters.

Let me begin by confirming that the speech from the throne contains the statement quoted by the member. In addition, at the time that the statement was read in the chamber as part of the speech from the throne, the House had not passed Bill 242, which is entitled An Act to amend the Education Act and certain other Acts in relation to early childhood educators, junior kindergarten and kindergarten, extended day programs and certain other matters. In today's Orders and Notices paper, I note that the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

Members will know that the speech from the throne is a ceremonial occasion when the Lieutenant Governor typically outlines the government's view on the conditions of the province and indicates what measures and programs the government intends to implement. I have reviewed other speeches from the throne in recent Parliaments, and I note that they often contain declaratory announcements that are similar in tone as the one in the case at hand. In addition, there was nothing procedurally deficient about the delivery of the speech from the throne. I therefore rule that the member's concerns do not raise a matter of order.

I now turn to consideration of the separate but related point of privilege raised by the same member on March 25. According to the member, members' privileges were circumvented when the government funded and distributed literature announcing the implementation of full-day learning for September well before Bill 242 was introduced in this House. The member objected that this literature did not mention that implementation of this program



was contingent on a parliamentary process, in particular, the passage of legislation. The member also requested that the Speaker review the authority by which the Ministry of Education can implement this program before the passage of legislation.

My review of the relevant precedents and authorities reveals that Speakers normally address such points of privilege as a matter of contempt as opposed to a matter involving a breach of one of the specific privileges belonging to an individual member or this House. Therefore, I will consider whether the concerns raised by the member for Oshawa raise a matter of contempt.

1140

I begin the exercise referring to the February 22, 2005 Speaker's ruling mentioned by the member for Oshawa. That ruling considered whether a government announcement was a matter of contempt in circumstances where the government had written letters on matters relating to education to various stakeholders; the government also had distributed a related press release and made an announcement that anticipated the introduction of a bill and a budgetary measure.

The ruling contains the following statement:

"The minister appears to have made an announcement outside the House that anticipates a bill and a budgetary measure. But there is nothing wrong with anticipation per se—it happens a lot; the issue is whether the announcement goes further and reflects adversely on the parliamentary process."

I've also reviewed rulings for the period between 1997 and 2001, when Speaker Stockwell and Speaker Carr ruled on several allegations that the government of the day had taken some action that reflected adversely on the parliamentary process.

For example, on January 22, 1997, Speaker Stockwell ruled on government advertising that made definitive statements concerning the government's program for reforms to municipal government. The advertising was distributed publicly on the same day that a bill implementing the reforms was introduced in the House. In ruling that a *prima facie* case of contempt was established, Speaker Stockwell made the following statement:

"The ads convey the impression that the passage of the requisite legislation was not necessary or was a foregone conclusion, or that the assembly and the Legislature had a pro forma, tangential, even inferior role in the legislative and law-making process, and in doing so, they appear to diminish the respect that is due to this House. I would not have come to this view had these claims or proposals—and that is all they are—been qualified by a statement that they would only become law if and when the Legislature gave its stamp of approval to them."

That was Speaker Stockwell in 1997.

There are similarities to the case at hand. None of the materials complained of and provided to me by the member for Oshawa refer to the passage of a bill. Therefore, the role of the Legislature is not acknowledged or deferred to. However, this in itself has been a significant problem for me in preparing this ruling, for it

is ultimately not clear that legislation is required to implement this program. If the sanction of the Legislature is already in place through another statute or by delegated legislation, then the steps the government has taken to put full-day learning in place do not produce the same level of concern in me that the 1997 circumstances aroused in Speaker Stockwell, for in effect, the House has already spoken and given prior authority for it to happen.

On the other hand, the House does have Bill 242 before it. On its face, Bill 242 seems to have the objective of establishing the necessary legal basis for this program to be fully implemented. A reading of the bill, its explanatory notes and the second reading debate leadoff speech given by the Minister of Education and her parliamentary assistant could certainly leave someone who is not an insider in the education system with the impression that the program cannot be set up without the passage of Bill 242.

It is therefore not surprising that, like me, the member for Oshawa and perhaps many others are labouring under some confusion as to the necessity of Bill 242 to the program's implementation, and whether or not the government will have the full statutory authority it requires until the legislative process has been completed and the bill passed. In other words, if the bill isn't needed, why is it being introduced and entitled in such a way as to suggest the opposite? I don't think that is an unfair question, but to get that question properly answered would take the legal analysis of the legislation and statutes, something many previous Speakers indicated in similar situations is not for the Speaker to undertake.

I am left with the explanation provided by the government House leader. She has written to me and on March 25 addressed this matter orally in the House. She asserts that there is prior existing authority in the Education Act for implementation and funding of full-day learning, and that while Bill 242 provides a fuller long-term framework for this program, the bill is not necessary to authorize it.

As the Speaker is always bound to respect the word of an honourable member of this assembly, I have no reason not to accept the government House leader's contention in this regard. I therefore rule that this matter raised by the member for Oshawa does not amount to a *prima facie* case of contempt.

In closing, however, I will tell the House that the Speaker is left feeling somewhat unsatisfied in this matter. When the government's legislative agenda is being actively carried out in the way all-day learning is currently being done across the province at the same time as this House is addressing a nominally connected bill, it certainly leaves some room for unwelcome ambiguity about the role of the Legislature. Surely it is not necessary to have to remind the government that in our system it is they who are answerable to the Legislature and not the other way around.

I thank the member for Oshawa for raising his concerns. I thank the government House leader and the NDP leader for their contributions.

The member for Oshawa.



**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Speaker, I just wish to thank yourself and the table for your timely consideration in this matter, as it does affect us all.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker makes reference to written arguments that have been delivered to the Speaker, and I'm not suggesting there's anything at all improper in that. The problem is that that written argument appears to be critical to the Speaker's ruling today. I'm not quarrelling with that.

That then takes us to—and I'm not seeking some sort of adjudication on whether or not there should be written submissions, but how do those written submissions then become part of the public record when one is analyzing this particular ruling? Without the written submission, the ruling could be perceived as broad, whereas—and I may well be wrong; I understand that—my sense is that the Speaker has based the ruling very much on the facts of this case rather than making a broad ruling.

I hope the Speaker understands my concern and why I raise this point of order. It seems to me important that written submissions somehow become part of the public record. I appreciate they could be tabled and therefore be accessible through the Clerk, but they are still not then part of Hansard, and that's the difficulty.

So I look for some clarity in there—or clarification, at least, in that regard. I hope the Speaker understands my concern.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the honourable member for raising the point. It is actually an issue that I have had discussions with the table about. It's an issue I'd actually like to see addressed by the House leaders, not just on the point that you have raised here, but I'll use the example of points of privilege.

The Speaker receives the necessary notice from an honourable member one day in advance, but there is no mechanism that allows the Speaker the opportunity to share that with the government House leader or the House leader from the third party, as in the most recent case with the point of privilege raised by the member from Whitby—Oshawa. So I would very much like to have this opportunity, to have the ability to discuss amongst the House leaders how I, as Speaker, continue to do my impartial job, but at the same time properly share information with all members so that they can have that opportunity to make their representation to me. I look forward at the earliest convenience to meeting with the House leaders to have further discussion in this regard.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1149 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** It's my pleasure to reintroduce Inna Dubrovsky, mother of page Diana, who is here to

see her daughter on her last day as a page. I personally want to thank Diana for her services and wish her well in the future.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would like to introduce Wilbert and Corinne Groskleg, the grandparents of page Giselle, who are visiting us today in the members' gallery west. I want to thank them for coming to see Giselle on her last day and thank Giselle for her wonderful service here as page.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### AMBULANCE SERVICES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Yesterday, I spoke with the Minister of Health and asked her to meet with representatives of the county of Wellington. Here's why: For years, the city of Guelph and the county of Wellington have worked in partnership on a joint land ambulance committee. With the city as the designated provider of ambulance service, the county and city each have had four members on this committee to represent the interests of their respective residents. Unfortunately, the relationship of the city of Guelph and the county of Wellington has become very strained in recent months. Two months ago, in a move that can only be described as provocative, the city took the extraordinary step of unilaterally disbanding the land ambulance committee. This has left the county taxpayers unrepresented when it comes to the governance of this important local service. The ambulance can literally mean the difference between life and death.

It is my hope that all areas of conflict between the city and the county can be resolved through negotiation, because we all need to try to get along with our neighbours.

As the MPP for Wellington—Halton Hills, I side with my constituents, and I believe that the Minister of Health has it within her power to broker a solution to the ambulance impasse.

The warden of Wellington county, Joanne Ross-Zuj, puts it well: "Our request is simple: Direct the re-establishment of the land ambulance committee, complete with equal representation by Wellington county councillors, in the form which existed prior to January 26."

I urge the minister to convene a meeting with the county without delay.

### FASHION INDUSTRY

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yesterday, Cheri DiNovo, the member from Parkdale—High Park, and Christine Elliott, the member from Whitby—Oshawa, held a news conference to call on the culture minister, Michael Chan, to include fashion under the province's mandate. I support them. It is a great idea.

Canadian designer Robin Kay says the Ontario government's failure to declare the fashion business a cultural industry like filmmaking or book publishing is simply out of style. She's absolutely right.



This place could use a little style. This place, men and women here, could use a little fashion.

I just don't understand it. I've been here for close to 20 years, and there is so much resistance to initiatives of this sort. I just don't get it. Quebec understands it, because in Quebec, where they did this, employment in the fashion industry doubled in less than a year. They know. In France, Italy, Germany, all over the world, ministers of culture are the most important things you can have in government. Here, they're the least important. I don't get it.

We know that there are 50,000 people in the GTA alone who are in the fashion industry. Ontario exported \$688 million in apparel in 2006, according to some designers. It's a great industry to support.

I'm looking forward to the minister saying, "We're finally going to include them under the mandate of the cultural ministry."

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I rise in the House today with good news from my riding of Ajax-Pickering. Over the past year, our provincial government has provided over \$170 million for 104 municipal infrastructure projects throughout the region of Durham. Here is just a brief update on a few provincially funded projects.

First: \$850,000 of provincial funding for the \$2.5-million redevelopment of the 139-year-old original St. Francis de Sales Church—where my parents were married, by the way. I think Rosario got me all confused here when I started talking about churches. The parish itself will be 150 years old this year. It will become the first arts and culture facility in Ajax. The town is hoping to give residents and visitors a sneak preview of this facility during Doors Open Ontario on September 18.

Second: almost \$700,000 for the \$2-million three-way funding of the Memorial Outdoor Pool retrofit at the town of Ajax municipal complex. This project will start in the next couple of days.

Third: \$70,000 dollars to the town of Ajax to fund two after-school programs at Terry Fox Public School and Bolton C. Falby Public School.

We, the people of Ajax, are very sincerely appreciative of what the Ontario government and the Premier have done for our municipality. A very sincere thank you.

#### DEMENTIA CARE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** On March 24, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario released their 10-step plan to reduce the economic and social toll of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in Ontario.

The report is entitled 10 by 20: Ontario Action Plan for Dementia. The plan sets out a number of ways for dealing with dementias within our health care system. They are: (1) to encourage brain health via early diag-

nosis and intervention; (2) to establish equitable and accessible caregiver supports; (3) to build a more coordinated, seamless and better-trained dementia workforce; (4) to invest in research towards treatment and a cure; and (5) to establish the Ontario government as a leader in making a national dementia policy.

The economic burden of dementias is expected to increase by over \$770 million each year until 2020, and the number of those being diagnosed is expected to increase by 40%. Yet only about one third of our LHINs have specifically included dementia as an issue in their plans for elder care. Speaker, 65% or more residents in Ontario's long-term-care homes have dementia, yet there have been no new investments in dementia training for their staff.

In closing, I would like to urge the McGuinty government to consider renewing Ontario's leadership in the treatment of those with dementia. It is something that affects far too many Ontarians for us to continue to ignore.

#### LONDON DISTRICT CHRISTIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I would like to commend the students and teachers from London District Christian Secondary School for raising over \$6,000 to support a small school in Nairobi, Kenya.

The school provides Sudanese refugees with an education and, ultimately, a better quality of life. These funds are so pivotal for the day-to-day functioning of this school since it's not eligible for Kenyan government funding.

The students and teachers from London District Christian Secondary School returned last week from their visit, and I am sure it was an eye-opening experience. I cannot stress enough how important it is to build bridges into different communities, foster dialogue and help those in need.

The students were able to develop lasting friendships through playing sports and sharing their stories. It also opened their eyes to the kinds of struggles that people their age in different parts of the world face.

I commend these teachers and students for their hard work and efforts in fundraising and hope these acts of generosity and goodwill continue over the years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to say this statement. I also want to echo my colleague the member from Trinity-Spadina and support his statement. I see in this House so many fashionable members, always dressed well and walking beautifully in this chamber.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Yesterday, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations released a report that confirms what the Ontario PC caucus has said for years: Ontario students are paying more to get less from the McGuinty government.



Ontario already has the highest tuition fees in all of Canada, and this week the Liberal government announced another 10% hike over the next two years. The Liberals use one hand to reach deeper into the pockets of students and they use their other hand to pull back on the quality of post-secondary education. The government is doing nothing to sustain or improve quality.

According to the National Survey of Student Engagement, when it comes to enriching educational experiences, active and collaborative learning, and student-to-faculty interactions, Ontario students are less positive about their experiences compared to other jurisdictions. In those three factors, Ontario's students are in the bottom third of the ratings in North America.

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According to the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, the student-to-faculty ratio at comparable schools in the United States is 13.7 to 1. In Ontario, it's 22.3 to 1. OCUFA reports even worse statistics. They say the ratio is 16 to 1 in the US, and 27 to 1 in Ontario. Either way you cut it, Ontario has the worst student-to-faculty ratio in all of Canada. This is leading to a decline of quality in post-secondary education in Ontario. A university degree is in danger of becoming just another piece of paper. It's not about training qualified people for today's economy; it's about cramming more students into the system so that the government can brag about higher participation rates. Shame on the government.

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** As we move forward in the 21st century, the difference between prosperity and just getting by can be summed up in a single word: education. More than seven in 10 new jobs now require some post-secondary training, and an educated workforce is a competitive workforce. That is why education means an investment in the jobs of the future.

Ontario's goal is to raise our province's post-secondary attainment rate to at least 70%. To that end, this province is investing \$310 million to create 20,000 new post-secondary education spaces across Ontario. This funding will be in addition to the \$155 million invested to support growth and enrolment in colleges and universities. This will help ensure that there is a place in Ontario for every qualified Ontarian who wants to attend college or university. More importantly, our province will move to attract the world's best and brightest to study here and to participate in our Ontario economy when they graduate and work here or return to their countries of origin. When you study here and learn how people do business here, you are more able to connect products and services produced in Ontario with what people need in other parts of the world, and that means jobs.

## HEALTHY LIVING

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I would like to thank the Anti-Aging Society of Canada, who co-sponsored a seminar in

my riding, and they have a fascinating message. The message is this: that for the first time in human history, you can slow down the aging process. You can age faster or you can age slower. You can go through life with basic health or with excellent health. Then is health passive? Or, the question was at that meeting, what can you bring to the healing process?

There are lifestyle changes, of course. You can bring them to the healing process.

**Exercise:** The University of Toronto, for instance, says that can you expand your life, extend it between 10 and 20 years, if you exercise. **Food:** Watch Canada's Food Guide. Get enough sleep, especially deep sleep. And watch what you take for supplements, and especially antioxidants.

Even more important, though, the idea there was that we should also watch what we think, what we call toxic thoughts. So what they encourage is thoughts of forgiveness, thoughts of love. Why is that important? Because they say that every thought, especially an emotive thought, leaves a trace on your body. If it's an embarrassing thought, it leads you to blush; with a scary thought, you get goosebumps; an exotic thought—you know what happens there.

So I want to thank Dr. Tam for pointing out that we can lift our thoughts and practise meditation and prayer, and that will certainly help the healing process.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Well, I have to say to the honourable member from Davenport that you look exactly the same today as you did when I arrived here in 1999.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

## EASTER

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I rise today to speak about Easter, a very important event in Christianity which is celebrated by millions of Ontarians every year.

In Western Christianity, Easter marks the end of Lent, a period of fasting and penitence which begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts 40 days. The week before Easter, known as Holy Week, is very special to Christians. Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. The last three days before Easter are known as Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, which respectively commemorate Jesus's entry in Jerusalem, the last supper and the crucifixion.

The week beginning with Easter Sunday is called Easter Week. Many churches begin celebrating Easter late in the evening on Holy Saturday at a service called the Easter Vigil. In some ways the service is similar to Christmas Eve midnight mass.

Easter is one of the most important annual religious festivals in the Christian year. According to Christian scripture, Jesus was resurrected from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. Some Christians celebrate the resurrection on Easter Day or Easter Sunday.



Easter is linked to the Jewish Passover by much of its symbolism as well as by its position on the calendar. In most European languages, the feast called Easter in English is termed by words for Passover for those languages and in older versions of bibles elsewhere in the world.

Relatively newer elements such as the Easter Bunny and Easter egg hunts have become part of the holiday's modern celebrations, and those aspects are often celebrated by many Christians and non-Christians alike.

On behalf of all my colleagues I wish to extend happy Easter greetings to all in this House and throughout Ontario.

WAYNE BUTT

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity and ask all members join me as we congratulate Wayne Butt for 30 years' service as access coordinator for the Legislature. But many of us in the chamber better know him as the stage manager in here, the eagle eye, the champion finger-snapper, the bouncer and, of course, the electronic device confiscator.

Congratulations on your 30th anniversary and thanks for your service to the Legislature.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (IGNITION INTERLOCK DEVICES IN SCHOOL VEHICLES), 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (DISPOSITIFS DE VERROUILLAGE DU SYSTÈME DE DÉMARRAGE DANS LES VÉHICULES SCOLAIRES)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to require school vehicles in Ontario to be equipped with ignition interlock devices / *Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant le Code de la route afin d'exiger que les véhicules scolaires en Ontario soient munis d'un dispositif de verrouillage du système de démarrage.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to require school bus vehicles to be equipped with ignition interlock devices to prevent anyone from getting behind the wheel to have alcohol on them ever again.

### PEACE OFFICERS' MEMORIAL DAY AND MEMORIAL ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LE JOUR DE COMMÉMORATION DES AGENTS DE LA PAIX ET LE MONUMENT COMMÉMORATIF À LEUR MÉMOIRE

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to proclaim Peace Officers' Memorial Day and to honour peace officers who have died in the line of duty / *Projet de loi 27, Loi proclamant le Jour de commémoration des agents de la paix et rendant hommage aux agents de la paix décédés dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** The bill establishes the third Sunday in September in each year as Peace Officers' Memorial Day. The bill also requires that a memorial be established in or adjacent to the legislative precinct of the Legislative Assembly to honour the memory of peace officers who have died in the line of duty beyond police, beyond fire and including all of those in all of the other ministries who put their lives on the line.

### CIGARETTE AND CIGAR BUTT LITTER PREVENTION ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 CONTRE LA POLLUTION PAR LES MÉGOTS

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act and the Highway Traffic Act to prevent littering with cigarette butts / *Projet de loi 28, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement et le Code de la route afin d'interdire la pollution par les mégots.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement?

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**Mr. Dave Levac:** The bill amends the Environmental Protection Act to increase the fine payable by any person who fails to comply with the provisions of part IX of the act, which deals with littering. The bill also re-enacts section 180 of the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit throwing, tossing, dropping, depositing or causing to be dropped or deposited litter, including cigarette butts, cigarettes, cigar butts or cigars upon or adjacent to highways. This, in the long run, saves millions of dollars of lost forestry in the north and anywhere else where fires are caught, putting our firefighters in jeopardy, in danger simply because we decide to throw a cigarette out the window.



## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY JOURNÉE MONDIALE DE SENSIBILISATION À L'AUTISME

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** It's a privilege to rise today to mark United Nations World Autism Awareness Day, which takes place tomorrow and every year on April 2.

C'est un honneur de prendre la parole aujourd'hui à l'occasion de la Journée mondiale de sensibilisation à l'autisme des Nations Unies, qui a lieu chaque année le 2 avril.

It's a day to recognize people with autism and salute their unique talents. Autism spectrum disorders, or ASD, affect at least 1 in 150 children, with more boys diagnosed than girls.

Since I became Minister of Children and Youth Services last fall, I have met many children and youth with autism and their families, as well as the dedicated people who work with them. I have listened and learned a great deal about the challenges they face every day.

Just this week, I had the opportunity to meet with Autism Parents Talking, or APTALK. I'm very pleased to be joined in the gallery by the chair of APTALK, Katherine Webster. I want to thank her and her son Jack, Elizabeth Laswick and her daughter Brooklyn, Suzanne Jacobson and her grandchildren Alexander and Nathan, and Tammy Kliewer and her son Tavish. They have shared their success, their struggles, their hopes and their dreams with me. I want to thank Tammy for the necklace that I'm wearing today in recognition of autism awareness.

Our government understands the challenges, and that is why we are determined to continue to make progress for these kids and their families. One of the most important things we have done is to improve the transition to school for children with autism who are leaving intensive behaviour intervention services funded by the province's autism intervention program. Working with the Ministry of Education, this spring we will have transition teams available in all publicly funded school boards. These multidisciplinary teams provide support for six months before and six months after a child leaves IBI services.

L'une des choses les plus importantes que ayons accomplies a été d'améliorer la transition vers l'école des enfants autistes qui quittent les services d'intervention comportementale intensive financés par le biais du programme d'intervention en autisme de la province.

A great example is 10-year-old Eric, who took part in phase one of the pilot project for transition teams at a school in Petrolia. Eric finds transitions like the one from home to school a real challenge. One activity that really helps him is taking attendance every day. This acts as a trigger point for him to make the transition from home to school. His mom, Sarah, says Eric's environment at

school is positive, and he feels comfortable being there. He is learning and enjoying it. Sarah says that that is so encouraging as a parent. These transition teams are a significant step forward, one that will help more kids with autism to succeed in school with their peers.

Ces équipes de transition sont un grand pas en avant, qui permettra à un plus grand nombre d'enfants autistes de réussir à l'école auprès de leurs pairs.

We're also helping kids with autism to attend seasonal camps in the summer and during March break, and other respite programs. At these camps they can make new friends and learn new skills.

I keep hearing from parents how thrilled they are that their kids are having fun with other kids in a caring, safe environment.

Eight-year-old Erin was a camper this past March break at Kerry's Place in Brampton. Her mom, Laura, said that the camp was important to Erin because she doesn't get involved in a lot, and it gave her an opportunity to be with a group of kids. Laura said that having the camp was a relief for both daughter and parents.

We're also looking at ways to promote consistency and transparency in clinical decision-making and assessment for IBI services delivered through the province's autism intervention program, because we want parents to feel confident that their children are receiving the right support at the right time.

We know that other approaches based on applied behaviour analysis can be very successful.

Nous nous penchons également sur des moyens de favoriser la cohérence et la transparence des évaluations et prises de décisions cliniques dans le cadre des services d'ICI offerts par l'intermédiaire du programme d'intervention en autisme de la province.

We will expand the range of ABA-based supports and services in communities and schools, including behaviour management and skills development programs, to help young people with autism become more independent and the best they can be.

Over the next several months we will continue the discussions we began last December with parents, service providers and other experts on the best ways to continue to broaden our autism supports and services. We will carefully weigh the advice we receive as we take a thoughtful and measured approach.

In recognition of World Autism Awareness Day, I want to reiterate our commitment to continuing working together as we make progress for children and youth with autism, and their families.

À l'occasion de la Journée mondiale de sensibilisation à l'autisme, je tiens à renouveler notre engagement à continuer d'œuvrer de concert, tandis que nous faisons des progrès en faveur des enfants et des jeunes atteints d'autisme, ainsi que de leur famille, car nous croyons fermement que tous ces enfants méritent un avenir radieux.

We do all of this because we believe that all kids deserve a bright future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?



**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to have this opportunity, on behalf of the official opposition, the Progressive Conservative caucus, and our leader, Tim Hudak, to acknowledge World Autism Awareness Day.

Each year on this day we raise awareness about autism, encourage early diagnosis and early intervention, and recognize the high rate of autism in children and adults in all regions of the world, and the consequent developmental challenges.

I also want to recognize our caucus's critic for the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister of Community Services, the MPP for Dufferin-Caledon, Sylvia Jones. Sylvia does an excellent job and is an outstanding advocate for all people with special needs.

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first few years of a child's life. It is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain. Autism affects typical development of the brain in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Children and adults with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities. They find it hard to communicate with others and relate to the outside world. In some cases, aggressive and/or self-injurious behaviour may also be present.

Persons with autism may exhibit repeated body movements, unusual responses to people or attachments to objects, and resistance to changes in routines. Individuals may also experience sensitivities in sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste.

Autism spectrum disorder is one of the most common developmental disabilities. Based on recent studies by Canadian researchers, the prevalence rate of autism spectrum disorder, or ASD, as it's known, is 1 in 165.

In Ontario there are approximately 70,000 individuals with ASD, yet most of the public, including many professionals in the medical, educational and vocational fields, are still unaware of how autism affects people and how they can effectively work with individuals who have autism. However, treatments like intensive behavioural intervention, or IBI, as it's known, can provide structured, rigorous and labour-intensive treatment for children with autism.

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This therapy helps young children to develop their verbal and motor skills, and it helps older children learn life skills such as bathing, washing dishes and doing laundry. This treatment helps children and adults with autism function at a higher level in school and participate in other events in their community.

While this therapy sounds helpful to families across the province, it is not helpful to the over 1,500 children who are on wait-lists for provincially funded IBI therapy or the almost 400 children who are still waiting for assessments.

While children sit on wait-lists for funding, I'm told that some families are paying \$60,000 per year out of their own pockets for IBI therapy. Families are selling

their homes, cashing in their savings and mortgaging their futures to ensure that their children have access to this treatment.

Autism Ontario called the McGuinty Liberal government's 2010 budget a no-news budget. For the third year, autism had not received mention in the provincial budget; it was not mentioned at all. Autism Ontario expressed displeasure with the lack of action or acknowledgment by the McGuinty government, expressing that it is not apparent that they will see any improvements to the currently unacceptable situations of service wait-lists and insufficient supports for those living with autism. I'm also informed that the McGuinty Liberals have yet to clarify whether their harmonized sales tax will be applied to IBI therapies. We don't know whether it will apply or not.

Applying the HST to families who are paying out of pocket for IBI treatment just throws salt on the wounds of parents who have given up so much to provide this therapy for their children. It is quite possible that the HST will in fact apply to IBI therapies. According to the Canada Revenue Agency, whether or not HST will be charged on IBI therapy will depend on the person providing the service and whether that person was referred by a medical practitioner.

While psychological services, when provided by a practitioner who is registered in the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, will be exempt, there are many private providers, who are not registered psychology service providers, who will be forced to charge an additional 8% to families who are already shelling out in the range of \$60,000 to pay for IBI therapy.

On World Autism Awareness Day, I think it is our role as legislators not only to acknowledge the facts of autism, but that families in Ontario are out there fighting every day for fair access to services and supports for their children. We salute them today.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I too rise to speak to this very important day, April 2, World Autism Awareness Day. I listened intently to my two colleagues and what they had to say, and some of the numbers and some of the facts I have are a little different. I guess that's whatever the history or whoever you're listening to. My facts are that one out of 91 children has some form of autism—perhaps not the severest types, but some form of autism disorder that affects their ability to communicate, to socialize and to learn.

I remember when I was a rookie in this House eight and a half years ago, I came in and I started to hear the very first passionate speeches about autism and what we should be doing as a society and as a government. I remember my colleague at that time Shelley Martel, who spent hours and hours on this file, talking about autism and going to meet with parents. I remember the then minister of the day, who was one John Baird, who has gone on to do other things in Ottawa. One of the responses he gave one day, which I will never forget, was that the Conservative government was not going to go



there because it was too expensive. I still remember the day that he made that statement here in this House, that it was too expensive, and wondering in my own heart of hearts, is it not more expensive to do nothing? Is it not more expensive to leave a child without a future and without hope? Is it not more expensive to the families who are forced to mortgage everything and do what they have to do?

Thankfully, the incoming government, the Liberal government, promised to do something, and I do take my hat off. In the first couple of years, you did do so. You did do some things, and I'm saying that is absolutely true. But I want to say that the situation in the last year or two has not gotten better. In fact, I believe it has actually gotten worse because this government now has put in a program which they call "benchmarking" of children. I think that this is a backwards step. I know that in other jurisdictions in North America, particularly in California, the benchmarking of children is illegal. You cannot do it, and they consider it morally reprehensible to do so. What happens when a child is benchmarked? It means that the treatment of that child is not progressing as quickly as the government would like so they deem the child to be not eligible for IBI/ABA therapy and force them into the school program. We know from parents that many of them believe that these programs are not adequate. We know from parents that they reluctantly take their sons and daughters to the school program because they believe that centres like the Geneva Centre provide better one-on-one IBI/ABA treatment and that's really what they want for their children.

Ontario is benchmarking at an increasing rate, and this means that the parents cannot access what they want for their own children. We believe that early intervention is necessary and that the very best service needs to be given. If a child is deprived of the chance to reach his or her potential to be productive and contributing, then society loses a lot. If the parents want to do something about it in the absence of government funding, we know it costs \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year, and most parents and most families cannot afford that.

Autism is in fact a puzzle. I've listened to scientists and I've listened to doctors, and although they're starting to make inroads in how to treat it, they don't know what causes it. But yesterday Sudbury New Democrat MP Glenn Thibeault introduced Bill C-504 calling for the establishment of a national strategy for autism spectrum disorder. I welcome that here in Ontario.

Parents are the experts. They know that the waiting times are two to five years. They know that the government is slow to update the quarterly numbers. The most recent statistics, for the quarter ending September 2009, show there are 1,286 children receiving IBI, but sadly, and I think horribly, 1,555 are on the waiting list, 383 are waiting to be assessed and 208 children have been benchmarked.

Parents will tell you how they've had to relocate, go to other provinces, change jobs and do a thousand things. We have had parents here who are trying to do the best

they can. They are talking today about court actions, hunger strikes, sit-ins, advocacies and rallies. Some even got removed from the Legislature today by showing signs and pictures of their children. Family after family is reaching out. We believe that no child should be benchmarked. The government needs to do more.

## PETITIONS

### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition from the people in the Vaughan-Oakwood area in regard to saying no to illegal guns in licensed premises.

"Whereas unlawful weapons have no place in our community and especially in licensed bars and clubs;

"Whereas we need to give the police more tools to deal with the growing number of shootings in and around licensed bars and clubs;

"Whereas suspending the liquor licence of bar owners who do not co-operate with the police in ensuring there are no illegal weapons in their place of business is one way of protecting the community from gun-carrying criminals;

"Whereas at present our liquor laws need to be amended to better support the police and the community in ensuring there are no unlawful firearms tolerated in licensed bars and clubs;

"We, the undersigned, support MPP Mike Colle's bill, the Liquor Licence Amendment Act (Unlawful Weapons in Bars), 2009, to suspend the liquor licence of bars and clubs where the police find unlawful weapons."

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water"—clean water—"is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulation practices of the former Conservative government; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:



"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government's plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water," as we should all have.

I affix my name to this petition and pass it to Anthony, our page.

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### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of my constituents and constituents from ridings surrounding the great riding of Oxford:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

"Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

"Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people's complaints about children's aid societies' (CAS) decisions; and

"Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman's office;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and investigate complaints concerning the province's children's aid societies (CAS)."

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition.

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we never want to see another tragedy like Walkerton ever again. The health and safety of Ontarians can never come second to profit and greed. Clean, safe drinking water is a right all Ontarians should be able to enjoy.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;

"To continue to monitor and test our water systems;

"To continue to strengthen Ontario's trust in the safety of our drinking water;

"To continue to invest in new systems and personnel to monitor and test our water;

"To never forget the mistakes of the past and always hold our water supply to the highest standard;

"To continue to invest in the health and safety of Ontarians through our water supply."

I fully agree with this. I will sign it and pass it on to page Leah.

### ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational standards and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with this petition, and I'll sign it. Thank you.

### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario's youth;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

"To continue to make our children a priority for this government;

"To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

"To continue to support Ontario's families through these initiatives; and

"To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and



look forward to their continued growth across the province.”

I agree with the petitioners, so I've put my signature on the petition as well.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** “Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** The subject of this petition is to try to stop the violence on public transit systems. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas too many innocent people are being victimized by acts of violence while using public transit; and

“Whereas too many public transit employees are being victimized by acts of violence while working to serve the public; and

“Whereas we need to send a strong message of zero tolerance for violence on public transit; and

“Whereas anyone harming or carrying a weapon on public transit should be dealt with by the full force of the law; and

“Whereas public transit riders and workers have the right to ride and work on public transit free of violence, intimidation and harm;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to put an end to violence on public transit and totally support” Bill 151 drafted by the member from Eglinton–Lawrence “to crack down on violence on public transit.”

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

“Whereas there is a unique opportunity to develop the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario and the Legislative Assembly” knows this, they should “ensure that this valuable resource is used to advantage all Ontarians while respecting the environment and rights of the First Nations people;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To develop the natural resources in the Ring of Fire for economic benefit for Ontario;

“To ensure that the development of the Ring of Fire does so only within the guidelines of an EPA report;

“To respect the rights of the First Nations people and their communities; and

“To work with local industry to bring employment to northern Ontario communities.”

I, of course, will sign that and have it sent up.

### ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the health of the First Nations youth in Ontario is of growing concern;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To continue the partnership with the Right To Play partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation;

“To expand the Right To Play program to other First Nations communities; and

“To follow up these programs to ensure that other initiatives continue to promote the health of First Nations youth in Ontario.”

I agree, I affix my signature to this and I will pass it to Sabrina.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas residents of Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty's new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$500,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and



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"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families."

I affix my signature, as I totally agree with this petition.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas violent crime and gangs have been a problem in our communities; children require safe schools and safe streets in order to thrive;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To continue with their support of the guns and gangs program;

"To continue to recognize the importance of a strong and educated police force;

"To continue to support rehabilitation programs;

"To continue to keep education as a top priority; and

"To continue to make our streets and schools safe places to be."

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Anne-Marie.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in support of the Eglinton LRT.

"Whereas investing in public transit and infrastructure is important to Toronto and to Ontario"—to keep Ontario working;

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line is a much-needed link that will travel along Eglinton Avenue, from Kennedy station in the east to Pearson airport in the west;

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would create 10,000 green jobs in construction, engineering and public transit;

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would be a boost for neighbourhood improvement, promoting local business and increasing property values for current retailers and homeowners; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has found it necessary to phase in the public transit projects due to the current" economic situations;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make the Eglinton LRT line a priority when developing the plan to phase in the public transit projects."

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### BILL OF RIGHTS FOR PUPILS WITH DIABETES, 2010

#### CHARTE DES DROITS DES ÉLÈVES DIABÉTIQUES DE 2010

Mr. Levac moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to establish a bill of rights for pupils with diabetes / Projet de loi 5, Loi établissant une charte des droits pour les élèves diabétiques.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I want to start first by offering my thanks and gratitude to a number of people and organizations that stepped forward when I first introduced this bill. Let me review those for you and actually introduce some of those people who have joined us today.

The Canadian Diabetes Association wants to say that they are very supportive of any efforts that we make in this Legislature and that any school board makes to help with diabetic children in schools, as there have been some stories coming out that it is not consistent in the province. I want to say thank you to the Canadian Diabetes Association.

I want to say thank you to the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, which has sent me a letter indicating full support for Bill 5 and understands the very important need to protect children with diabetes. Diabetes in Ontario Schools organization supports the bill, and we will be discussing in further detail even more work that can be done at committee, where I hope we do send this bill.

In the gallery today we have, from Diabetes in Ontario Schools, Shana Betz, Penni Gunby, Mandy Conlon and her daughter Ashley Conlon, who has diabetes, and from the diabetes association, Gabriella Simo, manager of public programs and services advocacy. They're with us in the gallery, and I'd like to welcome them and thank them for being here.

Next, I would like to thank two people who have worked very hard on this. Behind the scenes, as we all know as members in this place, there are staff here who help us do research and put it together and make sure we're on the right track with all the information that we have coming at us. That is Aviva Levy, the intern who is working in my office. Thank you very much for the work that you've done; you've grabbed hold of this and we'll call this your bill. To Chris Yaccato, my EA here at Queen's Park, thank you for the work that you've done.

I want to thank Diabetes in Ontario Schools. They have worked tirelessly with parents of kids with diabetes across the province and with schools and school boards across the province. This is a dedicated activist and parent group that compiled the results of a survey of over



250 parents whose kids have diabetes and attend schools in Ontario.

I admire Shana's commitment and can truly say that her work on this issue is greatly appreciated. The grassroots are speaking for us today. I know that we all want to listen. Sabrina's Law was written very much in the same way. Sabrina's Law is another private member's bill I introduced a while ago, that eventually got passed, that said that anyone with anaphylaxis would receive a consistent and standard expectation of behaviour at schools. Particularly when you think about it: We're not talking about just the kids themselves; we're talking about very loving parents who, when they give us in the education system their children, the gift of their child, hope that they're turning those children over to a system that keeps them safe and secure.

For today, I would like to say—I've already introduced them—a large thank you to all those people who have helped put us together, from the grassroots to here.

Let me also make an opening part of my statement that simply says that I've spoken to the Minister of Education. I'm not after punishing anybody; I'm just after changing a culture. I'd like the members opposite and all my colleagues to know that I'm interested in getting this bill to committee. I'm interested in hearing from other people. I'm interested in hearing from the Minister of Education. I'm interested in hearing whether there are other things that we can be doing in order to help protect these children.

Very similar in nature with what we went through with some students with anaphylaxis, it's life-threatening. We want to ensure that we're taking the right steps to ensure that the children, when given to us—as I said, a loving gift from parents—and they show up in our schools, we are doing the first and foremost thing that we're charged with. As a former principal in an elementary system and a teacher for 25 years, I defined my first role as keeping those kids safe. That's the first role, the number-one role: to keep those kids safe.

Let me describe for you what I believe the bill is asking us to do, if it's passed. This bill would allow students with diabetes, while in school and on extracurricular activities and excursions outside of the school that are sanctioned by the school, to complete the following:

- do a blood sugar check;
- treat hypoglycemia with emergency sugar;
- inject insulin when necessary;
- eat snacks when necessary;
- eat an appropriate lunch at an appropriate time, and have enough time to finish that meal;
- have free and unrestricted access to water and a washroom; and
- participate fully in physical education classes, gym classes and other extracurricular activities, including field trips.

Why phys ed, you ask? Simple. I'll give you one example—a shining example that most of the people in this room and in this generation would know: Bobby

Clarke. He had diabetes for a long time. NHL hockey player: You don't get to that level of athleticism if you are held back from taking phys ed class. You need to be a full participant in school.

Bill 5 specifies that the duty of every district school board and school authority is to ensure that this bill of rights is respected and enforced. Unfortunately, I believe this bill is required, as some pupils with diabetes are denied the opportunity to undertake many of the actions I've just outlined that should be commonplace for somebody with diabetes.

This bill is modelled after an American school bill of rights for children with diabetes, part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The diabetes bill of rights in the States is a law that affects all schools in the entire country receiving any federal money. Because education is a provincial jurisdiction in Canada, we're unable to have federal legislation similar to that in the States. However, if Bill 5 passes, it would undoubtedly help all diabetic students across Ontario and would set the standard for other provinces to follow, I'm sure.

With a bill of rights for pupils with diabetes, parents can be comfortable, and comforted, that their children's medical needs are cared for while the students still participate in school activities. The kids might not feel so bad, but I can guarantee you that the parents—and most of us being parents, we understand what it means to feel about your child when you don't have control of the situation. Hence, we would probably reduce the anxiety. Hence, we would probably reduce the anticipation and expectation that parents have to show up at the door on a daily basis to ensure that their children have those right-fully needed circumstances to deal with their diabetes.

Most kids I've dealt with over the years who have either anaphylaxis or diabetes were already pre-trained and prepared to take on the task of doing the things that they need to do medically. We just have to make sure that there's no door closed to them by a system that keeps them in school for a long period of time, and they have to be there. If left untreated, diabetes can cause serious complications to one's health.

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In addition, this bill is all the more important as we roll out full-day learning. Children will be in school for a longer period of time; therefore, kids with diabetes need to know that our support now is there for them more than ever.

I want to share with you a basic outline of type 1 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease. Basically, your body gets energy by making glucose from foods. The use of glucose for your body needs insulin. If an individual has type 1 diabetes, their pancreas does not produce insulin. Instead of being used for energy, glucose builds up in their blood. Unfortunately, the cause of type 1 diabetes is unknown. Why it happens we still don't know yet, but science is working on that.

We do know that people are usually diagnosed with type 1 diabetes before the age of 30 and often during



their childhood or teenage years. Hence, why we need to have Bill 5 is that the very large majority of those students end up in school, and if schools have a standardized policy across the province, we can be assured that those kids will be taken care of in a way that makes the stress level for the parents come down. They will be more than placated; they will be enthusiastically supporting a school that adheres to the outline in this bill.

Let me explain to you why the bill is important. The diabetic pupils across Ontario are not treated equally, unfortunately. We're hearing of schools that are treating students with diabetes beautifully. They get it. They get it, in a term I'll refer to in a moment. The teachers, the lunch monitors, the secretary, the caretaker, the principal, the school, the kids and the visitors—they get it. But that's inconsistent in the province. We need to standardize that expectation. We need to ensure that the horror stories that will be referenced by all members of this House will go away once and for all. Once we become standard in our expectation, education and understanding of how students should be treated with diabetes, we no longer have to worry—not only the students, not only the teachers or the school community, but the parents as well.

While local CCACs have worked too provide nurses in some schools at specific times during the day, that's just not good enough. In the meantime, let's take a look at what Bill 5 can provide for us.

I want to quote somebody—I'm going too slow here. I want to make sure I make points. There's one point that I definitely want to get to. This is a quote by Shana, who's with us in the gallery today. She says that children "require other accommodations such as being allowed to test their blood sugar in class or being permitted to treat low blood sugar. It sounds simple; however, it is just not happening. We have many stories of children not being permitted to treat low blood sugar with a simple juice box or granola bar in a classroom." Ashley was "centred out and asked to leave my classroom to drink a much-needed juice box because it wasn't fair to other students." Ashley faces this and it has been echoed by the Canadian Diabetes Association.

Someone like Ashley is no better a spokesperson than anyone else. As a matter of fact, I find her to be an extremely intelligent and well-articulated person who tells it as it is. You'll notice clearly that she did not speak just about herself. What she was talking about is that any kind of treatment of this type that she's had to go through is unacceptable in the province of Ontario today.

I encourage all of our members to get behind this bill. I encourage all of us to listen to Dr. Denis Daneman, the pediatrician-in-chief at Sick Kids, who said that there are 7,000 to 8,000 children under the age of 18 in Ontario with type 1 diabetes, with a 3% to 5% increase every year. As well, over 300,000 Canadians live with type 1 diabetes, according to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Canada. What he wants to know is why we aren't setting a standard.

Thank you to all of those people, including the grassroots organizations, who have brought attention to the

fact that we need to have a standard of expectation and behaviour in our schools across the province of Ontario. I want to thank the doctor. I want to thank the organization. I want to thank Ashley. I want to thank all of those who understand that what we're looking for today is simply a way in which the students with diabetes can find a better way to be safe and secure in the schools that they attend.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm pleased to rise in support of this legislation. The member from Brant has a habit of bringing very practical private member's bills before the House, and I think this is just one more example of that.

I am pleased to not only support the bill but also to encourage my colleagues to do so as well. I want to express my appreciation to a constituent, Mr. James King, who has written me on a number of occasions on the issue of diabetes. He and his wife, Heather, have a son Zachary, who is 11 years old, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. He facilitates a support group for parents with children with diabetes. As he tells me, he hears horror stories from parents as well as very positive stories. I think it's important for us to keep this in balance because there are many schools that, as the member from Brant indicated, really do understand. They understand the challenges that students have and the role and responsibility that the school has to ensure that children are kept safe and have the support that they require. But Mr. King also told me that there are far too many stories that he hears from parents that are very, very troubling.

I also want to thank Shana Betz, with whom I had the opportunity to speak on the telephone. She was kind enough to share with me some of the results of the survey that her group, the Diabetes in Ontario Schools group, conducted. Again, the experience of this survey, which includes more than 250 results, confirmed the inconsistency that the member is trying to address. There is no reason why one school or one set of staff or one principal really understands and does what has to be done, and then there are others that don't. This is a responsibility not only of the Ministry of Health; I believe it is a responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to get it together.

I want to read into the record just very briefly some of the comments that came from this survey. It goes to the heart of why we're debating this bill today. I quote: "Our son on many instances has asked to use the washroom facilities during a hyperglycemic state and has been refused, even with extensive diabetic teaching provided to classroom and office staff."

The second quote: "Our son has been denied low sugar snacks during a hypoglycemic state by school support staff that were not updated on his condition and as a result almost losing consciousness."

The third quote: "The school refuses to follow the guidelines set out for them. More than once they have refused to treat a low before a meal as my child will be eating. When I pick up my child from school the teacher



tells me that he was perfect with his blood sugar levels ... only when I get home and check the memory button do I find out the truth." That's unacceptable.

We understand that teachers today are busy, that they have a great deal on their plate, and perhaps it's time that we look at resourcing our schools more appropriately. There are many challenges, and whether it ranges from autism to diabetes to other issues, the day of having a nurse in that school facility may be something that we should be looking at. I'm not suggesting that every teacher should be a nurse, but I am suggesting that we have a responsibility to ensure that our schools are properly resourced so that someone is there to meet the kinds of needs that we're discussing today.

My executive assistant, Alex Roman, is not in the office today as he is every day—he doesn't miss a time—he is at home. I didn't even realize this until just a few days ago, but he is a diabetic. I shared with him what we would be debating today, I asked him to give me a letter, and I'd like to conclude my remarks by reading into the record Alex's letter to us.

"As a diabetic of more than eight years, I would like to voice my strongest support for private member's Bill 5, Bill of Rights for Pupils with Diabetes, which has been brought forward by Mr. Dave Levac.

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"Diabetes is a multi-variable disease that affects many organs at once and has a lasting impact on the quality of one's life. I wanted to share my own current experience with a diabetic-related condition to illustrate how pernicious a disease it truly is.

"Last Thursday, in the course of fulfilling my duties in the office of my member, Mr. Frank Klees, MPP, I felt a sharp pain in my right foot that lingered throughout the morning. Deciding to visit a walk-in clinic nearby, I was told to report to the hospital emergency department. Once there, an infected ulcer in the sole of my foot was surgically removed. Further X-rays revealed two more ulcers that had been growing undetected around the large toe. The infection had spread into the foot bone.

"Left untreated, the condition would have certainly led to amputation. I still face that possibility. I am currently connected to a PICC line where a thin tube has been surgically inserted into a vein close to my heart for the purpose of directly pumping intravenous antibiotic into my system. The PICC line and accompanying bag will be my constant companions for the next month, reminders to me about the horrific nature of diabetes.

"Make no mistake about it—I did this to myself by my unwillingness to take diabetes as the very serious disease that it is. What is most annoying and difficult about diabetes management, however, is the daily routine of glucose testing, regular and proper diet together with exercise and adequate medical supervision of one's health to catch problems before they are able to do severe damage.

"In school, as in the workplace and society in general, all this 'bother' is compounded and is made more difficult by our natural desire not to stand out and have

our diabetic condition made visible to our peers so as to avoid being socially stigmatized by the disease.

"A bill of rights for diabetic students would give their condition and its daily management a certain legitimacy of acceptance by schools. It would also help establish a 'culture of diabetic management' that would support pupils so that their sense of being different does not turn into an experience of social estrangement.

"Diabetics need to test their sugar levels, they need to eat more frequently and avoid the ever-present temptations of sugary snacks. They need additional bathroom trips and may require insulin. Skipping meals or else feeling guilty about taking too long to finish lunch can be lethal to diabetics. In fact, the balanced healthy lifestyle diabetics must nurture should also be part of a wider culture of good health that needs to be much more widespread in our society if we are to effectively combat the runaway growth of diabetes at all ages.

"It is with a sense of urgency born of personal experience that I lend my voice of support to this important legislation.

"Alexander Roman, Ph.D., executive assistant to Mr. Frank Klees, MPP for Newmarket-Aurora."

Speaker, I leave that with you and with members of this House.

This is important. I thank the member for bringing it forward. We look forward to supporting it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** New Democrats are going to vote for the bill. We hope that the bill goes to committee, and we wish Mr. Levac well with the bill. We know that the committee hearings, if indeed they're adequate, are going to attract a great deal of attention.

As I understand it, diabetes is one of the growth diseases and it's one of those diseases that's impacting more and more people. In many respects, for many persons—not all—it's no doubt part of a lifestyle phenomenon. That's why our member from Nickel Belt, France Gélinas, is so enthusiastic and zealous about her legislation about food labelling and fast food restaurant food labelling: because diet, for many, is a large contributing factor to diabetes.

As I understand it, as well, for people the age of Mr. Levac and me, once we acquire the paunch—interestingly, a couple of years ago, I was reading that in old American slang a paunch is referred to as an "alderman"; in other words, "Take a look at the alderman that fellow is sporting." Of course, the connection wasn't inappropriate, because you're talking about, in the American context, Tammany Hall-type of so-called elected officials—Chicago-style politics, if you will—who would be well-fed, well-wined, well-dined, and would be sporting their aldermen, their paunches. Fortunately, I've lost mine over the last few months. I just hope I don't regain it. I'll then be one of those rare people who come here and get skinnier, because most people come here and inevitably get fatter because of the lifestyle and things that you're subjected to on Friday and Saturday



nights and Sunday afternoons when you're back in your riding and the Hungarian Catholic Church wants you for lunch and then the Croatian hall wants you for dinner. It's never-ending.

We're going to support this. Again, for the life of me, I can't imagine how a kid copes with this type of condition. Knowing that kids being kids and kids should live without fear of falling unconscious and going into shock, diabetic comas, without fear of dying, kids who live with this are pretty admirable kids, as are all kids—all of us have had any number of experiences in our own communities working with organizations that work with kids with any number of conditions, diseases, what have you. Kids who endure these things are remarkable young people in their own right.

It is a bill of rights, and that's an interesting observation as well. It's in our culture. We're a rights-based society. Lord knows one wishes that it could just be called a statute demanding common sense. At the end of the day, I suspect that that's what Mr. Levac is really referring to. But having said that, let's all of us be very careful, because this imposes—if there are rights, then other people have duties. This bill imposes duties upon educational staff.

I'm loath to make private members' public business on Thursday afternoon a partisan matter. But you know as well as I do, Speaker; you've been around for a long time. You know as well as I do that teachers and other educational staff in our schools are struggling as it is with the loads that are imposed upon them, the responsibilities, the duties that are already imposed upon them. I would find it very interesting to talk to teachers, teachers' assistants and teachers' aides, all those people in the educational community about how you give effect to the rights that are guaranteed in this legislation. Because you can pass the bill, you can turn it into law—and I was pleased to support, and New Democrats to the final one supported the bill that brought anaphylactic shock education, care and understanding into the schools. I know that the local community down in Niagara where I come from was pleased as punch when that bill finally became law, and I was pleased to have spoken in support of that bill in its day and on behalf of New Democrats who supported it.

But almost immediately one of the observations made to me was by parents of kids who were at risk of anaphylactic shock, who had this condition where a bee sting or peanuts could put them into a life-threatening condition. It was the fact there was a bill that was well intentioned, that was well drafted, that talked about education and so on, but there weren't resources being delegated, being committed to ensure that the bill had effect.

So we can pass this bill. What good do rights do? It's sort of like the right to proceed on a green light. That right doesn't mean a tinker's damn if some damn fool on your right is going through a red. You can have all the rights in the world. It doesn't stop you from being T-boned by a drunk driver—end of story.

So you see, this bill, in and of itself, at the end of the day won't necessarily—I'm sure it will start to change the culture. I suspect very strongly that one of Mr. Levac's motives here, and I am imputing motive, is to try to heighten the level of awareness of youth diabetes and responsibilities adults have—it's really not about teachers or educational professionals; it's about adults' responsibility to kids, isn't it? Isn't that the bottom line? That's really what it's all about. I admire that motive, and that is, heightening awareness of this, making us all more conscious of the fact that kids live with this and that kids have special needs when they do live with it. But I'm concerned, and I suspect that Mr. Levac is as well, about imposing burdens on education professionals when they are already overburdened up to here.

1420

Mr. Klees talks about the restoration of the school nurse. What a novel idea. It's peculiar that when you think you have a community of 100, 200, 300, 400 or 500 kids engaging in high-risk behaviour—kids do that; they engage in high-risk behaviour. They're out there playing on the tarmac and in fields. They believe they're omnipotent and incapable of being injured, never mind being killed. You've got kids living with all sorts of conditions and disorders; theoretically you'd have communities of 400, 500, 600, if not larger, without an on-site, attendant, health care professional. I don't want to harken back to old days, but in the old days for a whole lot of people who went to elementary or high school, you had those health professionals in the school system. It was part of the public health process.

I know that Mr. Hampton, the member from Kenora—Rainy River, is eager to speak to this bill as well. I suspect it will be Mr. Marchese, who's our education critic, and/or France Gélinas, who's our health critic, who will be walking this bill with Mr. Levac through committee. But I look forward to seeing the committee and the commentary, and I look forward to seeing this bill refined. I look forward to seeing this government stand up for kids and investing the resources that are going to be necessary to make this bill meaningful.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** I'm pleased to rise and support my colleague and to piggyback on yet another one of his creative, pragmatic, child-safety-oriented pieces of legislation. He does that regularly, with the admiration of most, if not all, of his colleagues in this House.

Many of us in this place have found ways to advocate for issues impacting children, particularly child health over the years. The member articulating his arguments read out a list of those issues that need to be addressed for the 8,000 children who are afflicted with diabetes 1. He made the point that no child should feel stigmatized because of their illness. I suspect the member from Brant was alluding to the requested removal of the child from the school as being a classic example of how one might inadvertently and unintentionally add a little bit of further darkness to what, for the child, is a night already devoid of stars. So I offer that up for what it's worth.



I know that there's a real advantage to having the tools that one needs to meaningfully combat diabetes. I know that from personal experience. I'm a diabetic. I'm also an adult who fortunately is married to a medical doctor who's always on my case about making sure I do the right things, and I strive as hard as I can to do that. But it does impact your life. There are consequences to doing the things that one ought not to have done, as they say in my local church, but that is something that we have to deal with.

If we can create a learning environment, one where children are accepted and the fact of their illness is used maybe even as an educational tool for their peers, we can all together move forward in helping to enhance one's quality of life.

Recently, my wife and I were away with another couple out of country. We were away for a week and we tried very, very hard to have a great holiday away, but the couple we were away with have a teenage son, a high school student who's a juvenile diabetic. It was interesting—three, four phone calls home a day: "How are you doing?" They were very, very worried. I suspect that they didn't have anywhere near as good a time as they and we would have liked to have seen them have because of their anxiety related to their child—who, by the way, has an insulin pump thanks to what this Legislative Assembly did two years ago when we debated and passed the resolution calling for the provision of insulin pumps.

But even with that, to these parents, it was scary. Even though they had made arrangements to provide care and support for their teenage son, it was scary, and it can be scary. Whatever we can do to make lives a bit more liveable and to educate, particularly at a young age, our children about both the benefits of preventive health as well as supporting those of their peers who have diabetes is good.

I applaud the member from Brant—he's a good friend, but more importantly than that, he's one who cares passionately, perhaps because of his educational experience and the fact that he's a father with his own children who has had to go through some of these things—for his initiative today. I would urge all members of this assembly to stand in solidarity with the good member from Brant and support this legislation. Let's move it forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak briefly to Bill 5, brought forward by the member for Brant, the bill that he calls the Bill of Rights for Pupils with Diabetes. I understand that this bill was first introduced in this House in March—on March 10, it looks like—and I'm pleased that we're having this opportunity on a Thursday afternoon before Easter to discuss it at second reading.

From the outset, I want to indicate that it's my intention to support this bill at second reading. I would say to the member for Brant, congratulations on bringing forward a bill and congratulations on the non-partisan way that you're bringing it forward in an effort to reach

out to the other side of the House. I was glad to have the opportunity to speak to you about some of the issues that you're bringing forward.

I understand the bill is intended to ensure that students with diabetes have certain rights. For example, while at school, a pupil with diabetes would have the right to do regular blood sugar checks; treat hypoglycemia with emergency sugar; inject insulin when necessary; eat a snack when necessary; eat lunch at an appropriate time and have enough time to finish the meal; have free and unrestricted access to water and the bathroom; and participate fully in physical education classes, gym classes and other extracurricular activities, including field trips.

I know the member from Brant has a great deal of professional expertise from his educational background and I know that he is sincere in terms of bringing this forward. He has urged the government to support it, to send it to committee, and I would hope that it will go to committee. I would hope that it will get on the committee's agenda and not just sit there for a long time, as unfortunately some private members' bills do. I would suggest to the member that, in my experience in government, there were times when my private members' bills had gone to committee and I had to forcefully push for them to get considered.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The member opposite probably knows what I'm talking about: It was the double-hatters bill, for example. It did not have the support of the government, but by the efforts that we took, we had an opportunity to have hearings on that bill and get it brought back to the House. But I certainly would hope that his bill will succeed at committee and be brought back to the House for third reading.

If my good friend and colleague Alex Roman is watching today—I'm pleased that my colleague Frank Klees mentioned Alex's situation, although I wasn't aware that Alex was ill—Alex, we wish you all the best for a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing you back here again.

The remarks that Mr. Klees brought into the House on behalf of Alex Roman I think were ones that we should all listen to. What Alex has suggested is, "A bill of rights for diabetic students would give their condition and its daily management a certain legitimacy of acceptance by schools. It would also help establish a 'culture of diabetic management' that would support pupils so that their sense of being different does not turn into an experience of social estrangement." That is good advice, and again, Alex, if you're watching, I hope you're back soon, and God bless for a speedy recovery.

I've appreciated the chance to speak briefly to this bill this afternoon. I look forward to further debate on it, but I encourage all members to give it their support this afternoon at second reading.

1430

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?



**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I intend to support this bill, and I know that my New Democrat colleagues intend to support it as well. But I want to use my time to raise some questions about why this bill is even necessary.

I want to make this point: It's necessary because diabetes is not taken seriously enough in Ontario today by the Ministry of Health. In fact, just 10 months ago there was an active campaign under way in the Ministry of Health to essentially transfer the whole diabetes program to Cancer Care Ontario and in effect diminish the importance of the diabetes program.

I want to read a letter—I could read dozens of letters on this issue—from someone who is in the know. This is dated July 10, 2009:

“Dear Minister:

“I was recently reviewing the Cancer Care Ontario ... website and happened upon some information which I find extremely disturbing and feel warrants comment to you, as minister. From the website, it seems apparent that” the Ministry of Health “has a strategic plan in place to transfer diabetes care in the province to Cancer Care Ontario and/or the Ontario Renal Network. As a diabetes care advocate, I find it shocking that the ministry, having identified diabetes as a priority, would think it appropriate to place the responsibility for it under an organization with a mandate for cancer care. If this is in fact the case, I have grave concerns for the future of diabetes care in this province....

“Which leads me to question why the ministry would contemplate such a significant and unnecessary transfer. It definitely will not be a cost saving, and with the current escalating epidemic of diabetes, this can only be a strategy for disaster, both economically and health-wise.

“When I noticed the change on the” Cancer Care Ontario “website, I contacted the” Northern Diabetes Health Network “office to obtain additional details on the transfer. Sadly, I was told that the” Northern Diabetes Health Network “had few details and could tell me very little. It would seem to me they were never invited to the discussion table regarding this ministry transfer. What else am I to believe, given that they were unable to provide any information and yet” Cancer Care Ontario “representatives are now publicly advertising diabetes-related job positions? Is this democracy? Is this efficiency? Is this accountability? Is this in the ... best interests of the Ontario diabetic population? Is this truly what the voters of Ontario want? Certainly not, if my information is correct....

“I would sincerely and strongly hope that you would quickly re-examine this flawed strategy before it is too late. Too many lives and too many families and too many extra tax dollars are at stake here. Diabetics will take notice of being undermined in this way.”

Now, as we know, after this torrent of letters, this plan to basically submerge the diabetes program under Cancer Care Ontario was reversed, and well that it was reversed.

But this is an illustration. Diabetes care is not taken seriously enough by the government currently. If it was taking diabetes care seriously, it would never have entertained the idea of submerging diabetes care under

Cancer Care Ontario. That's what we really need: serious attention to diabetes as a health issue in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** First, I want to thank the member from Brant, who is always bringing very important issues. As the member from Newmarket–Aurora mentioned, he brings practical issues to this House to be debated.

I also want to thank the family, the students who came, and Mr. Levac's staff for putting in all the effort to build this debate.

It's an important debate, as has been mentioned. This issue is very important for students across the province of Ontario who have diabetes. It's important also, as was mentioned, for the families who, every single morning, worry about their loved ones when they go to school. Are they going to be in trouble? Are they going to be treated well?

The most important thing: Mr. Levac in Bill 5 is not asking much. He's asking just to give the students some time or some kind of flexibility to eat if they have to eat, to drink when they have to drink or to go outside if they have to go outside. The most important thing is that most of the time teachers and principals block those students with diabetes from participating in normal life—like he mentioned, from sports activities. I think it's important to construct that right. If this bill passes and goes to the committee, I think it would benefit all of us in this place and all the communities across the province of Ontario, because they have a right and a chance to have input to enhance this bill and make it an important one to serve our communities, to serve our students and to serve our families in the province of Ontario.

I'm not here to respond to the member from the third party. We have a strategy for diabetes. We invested millions of dollars to create a diabetes strategy to serve all the diabetics across the province of Ontario, because it's in our best interest to serve people with diabetes. It is important to save our health dollars, utilize them and invest them in the right spot.

It's important to support this bill. I want to congratulate the member from Brant for bringing, as always, important issues to this House. I know this bill is going to get the support, hopefully, of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health. It already has the support of the diabetes associations and of many teachers across the province of Ontario. It means a lot to the people of Ontario and means a lot to many different families who have their loved ones facing this difficult time when they go to school.

So I want to support this bill, because it's important to us. It's important for the future generation of this province. Again, thank you for allowing me to speak.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Ramsay:** I'd like to congratulate my colleague and my friend Dave Levac, the member from Brant, for being the advocate that he is. We could see



today with his other interests in public issues in this province that he's a very strong advocate for Ontarians and, in this case, for people who are very vulnerable.

I was certainly taken by my colleague Frank Klees's situation with the staffer and that letter that he read into the record from his staffer.

Those of us who aren't all that aware of the disease, who haven't had as much direct contact with it, probably aren't as aware of how fragile people with it are. I think most of us understand that it's critical to manage the disease well, and that takes a lot of discipline. Potentially, it can be a life-shortening disease if you don't manage it well. But I was quite taken aback by the letter that was read into the record about a young staffer in this precinct who, all of a sudden, starts getting what appears to be a kind of minor trouble that potentially could be quite complicated and maybe debilitating. So, Mr. Klees, I wish your staffer well and hope he pulls through there.

What Mr. Levac is trying to do I think is very, very important. It's really—I guess I'd describe it as what we need to do with a lot of people in society, and that's accommodate. We need to accommodate people who have special needs. I suppose that over time we begin to understand and appreciate what may be special needs that all of us might have. In this case, we're talking about a very serious disease, a disease that seems to be on the uptick, unfortunately. I first had really great awareness as a northern member of the spread of this disease in the aboriginal community in this province and in this country. Now we're seeing right across North America a large increase in this disease.

For type 2 diabetics, it would appear that for many of us in society, the way we eat can contribute to this. We're all going to have to watch that. The irony is that half the world is hurting themselves by eating too much, and the other half doesn't get enough, and they're being hurt by that. We're going to have to find that balance in our lives and control a disease like this.

I very much appreciate what David Levac is trying to do with the school boards and schools, which brings awareness for this accommodation so that we can work with people and provide the opportunity they need to properly manage their disease. We're just going to have to be more flexible. We don't all fit in the same mould. We all have varying needs. I very much appreciate the motion and the bill that's coming forward this afternoon.

1440

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? The Liberals have about one more minute. Seeing none, Mr. Levac, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** Take three.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I'll take three.

I want to thank the members from Newmarket–Aurora, Welland, Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Wellington–Halton Hills, Kenora–Rainy River, London–Fanshawe, and Timiskaming–Cochrane for lending their voice to the bill.

Let me make a couple of quick comments. For over 25 years, 12 of them as a principal in the education system, I

was quite astutely aware of the Education Act, and the Education Act is relatively silent when it comes to specifics behind children and their care.

Here's what the Education Act says: care and control and safety of the children. That's basically what it is. We never anticipated, back when it was written, drilling down to life-threatening situations. That's precisely why I introduced the anaphylaxis bill and now I'm introducing the same bill for diabetes: because they can be life-threatening.

I think we need to speak better. We need to have a better understanding of what it is that children and parents face when we're dealing with this issue. That's the reason I'm here. It's not to do anything else other than to bring attention, to educate and to work together with all of the stakeholders. That's why I want to get it to committee. I want everyone to have a voice. I want us to design a bill or a change to the Education Act, or however it gets done, and I need this to be done for the sake of those kids. That's why I'm bringing it forward.

I've seen good teachers turn it into math lessons; I've seen good teachers turn it into social skills lessons; I've seen good teachers turn this into an opportunity to be positive and inclusive, but that's not the standard. We need to make that the standard. That's precisely why we're doing it.

To Mr. Kormos's concerns: Yes, I did raise this, and the teachers are willing to work together as one of those stakeholders; and no, we're not trying to hoist something on to it. I had that discussion with the Minister of Education.

As far as the member from Kenora–Rainy River, I think your support was accepted, I think you're on to something, but I want to remind you of one thing: The parents were here to deal with their kids in schools, not about the bigger issues. So I'm hoping that you understand. I did hear you say that you support this—because it is not a small deal; it's a very big deal.

Thank you for your support, thank you to all the people who are here to hear this, and I know we'll get this to committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll vote on Mr. Levac's ballot item in about 100 minutes.

## CONSUMER REPORTING AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

### LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RENSEIGNEMENTS CONCERNANT LE CONSOMMATEUR

Mr. Ruprecht moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act /  
Projet de loi 7, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les  
renseignements concernant le consommateur.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.



**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** The intent of this bill is to protect the consumer against identity theft and, second, to protect the consumer against unfair credit practices.

Let's begin from the very first day that I got interested in this. I received from MBNA a statement saying that I owed \$866. I was nonplussed about this because I don't own, to my knowledge, an MBNA credit card, and here I was being asked to pay this kind of money. What was I supposed to have purchased in North York and then in the United States? There are two items on here: I was supposed to have purchased some Dell computers and then some clothing in Houston, Texas. So I just called up and said that I was totally unhappy about this, because why should I pay for someone else's purchase? Well, I did not exactly receive a good reception, and it took me many, many hours to straighten this out. Then I thought, what would have happened if I had not been an MPP, or if I were a person who didn't speak English very well, or if I was a senior in a home who receives many of these credit cards that most of us receive?

Look at this. I have with me a number of offers of credit cards. All these credit cards were received in one home with four persons in it over the period of one year. Imagine that. It says right here, "All you have to do, Mr. Tony Ruprecht, is call this number and here's your card." "Here's your card"; in fact, not just only one card but as soon as you graduate, you get two cards, three cards or four cards.

In fact, I have some statistics here that blew my mind after I looked at them. I'll get this to you later, but there are some statistics that are very, very perturbing. It says simply this—and I'll give you the quote in a minute. But apparently there are over—and get this—50 million credit cards out there in Canada just by—

**Mr. David Ramsay:** Unsolicited?

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** No, no. They could be unsolicited—but just by Visa and MasterCard. Two credit-informing agencies, credit-granting institutions: over 50 million credit cards. Our population in Canada is not 50 million. What is it? Thirty-two million or maybe 33 million right now. That's all.

Now, just two credit-granting institutions—50 million. I wonder how many there are of all the other institutions. There must be millions hanging around everywhere. Is it any wonder that we, the consumer, you and I, need protection? We have to have protection, not just against fraud but against this onslaught of pushing credit down our throats. Yeah, sure, we are society that depends on credit, there's no doubt about that, but this, my friends, is too much. Imagine young people getting a bunch of cards and going out on a spending trip and then, later on, having to pay it back, and who knows how long it takes to do that?

So I was not happy when I received this, because basically what happened here is, I was subject to identity theft. Someone else took my card that I didn't even have and apparently bought all kinds of things with it.

Let's have a look at how many other people are being affected by this. Here are the statistics. In 2009—just a

few months ago—KPMG e-crime survey reports that user passwords, PKI credentials, tokens and smart cards do not protect the consumer. All this is sensitive data that cannot be protected from sophisticated hackers and organized crime.

It was indicated in the survey that 6.5% of Canadian adults, or almost 1.7 million people, were victims of some kind of identity fraud in the last year alone. Imagine that—1.7 million people being subject to identity fraud. Wow. We've got a crime wave. No wonder everybody knows that identity theft is the biggest crime in North America and still growing. These victims spent over 20 million hours and more than \$150 million to do what? To resolve the problems, just to ensure that their credit rating is back to normal. They're spending \$150 million just on that. So we've got a problem here.

The 2009 report on organized crime in Canada released in August 2009 by CISC outlines the state of organized criminal activity in Canada. In the report, CISC says that it expects to see more credit and debit card fraud in the future and that hackers are targeting on-line sites and using various methods to steal credit card information. Wow, of course they do that.

Here is another example: The Privacy Commissioner of Canada doesn't have a secured site apparently because for just a few bucks, a few dollars, I can get personal information about the Privacy Commission in Canada. Can you imagine that? In other words, what information could people get about me? It's all out there in cyberspace; it's all out there to be had for a few short dollars.

The report goes on to say that the growth in Internet banking has caused criminal activity to become more lucrative and more common. As one of my colleagues indicated here, it is an epidemic, and how can we possibly help our poor consumers? How do we start to protect them? But it isn't all that easy either.

Let me start by saying, first, it is important that our credit rating is protected. Why is that? Why is it so important that your credit is protected? It is important because the consumer cannot survive without credit. We're all indebted to credit. We need credit. The Canadian Bankers Association website shows that the Visa and MasterCard are really into the millions, as I said earlier. Since we're living now in a credit-dependent world, we need to help our citizens to understand its dangers and its pitfalls.

1450

Let's take a good look at the credit reporting system as it is provided by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. They say that credit reporting agencies, and we have two big ones, as most of us know—Equifax and Trans-Union—are private companies that collect information about the consumer's credit history and transactions and then sell this information in the form of a consumer report. Since we've become an increasingly credit-dependent society, the credit reporting system can have a major impact on all aspects of your life. It is one means by which credit grantors obtain information that they use



as part of the credit decision process to determine your ability to get a bank loan, a bank account, a mortgage, a credit card, even employment and rental accommodation. Everybody checks our credit. Knowledge about the credit reporting system as well as the accuracy and reliability of such reports is therefore critical to us as consumers, and critical to us as MPPs, for that matter. It is also critical to understand that credit reporting agencies have a file, a financial profile, on literally every breathing Canadian. Every breathing Canadian has an albatross around their neck if it should ever become a matter of identity theft, if it ever should become a matter of your file being compromised.

Only 17% of Canadians adults 18 and over have checked their credit rating in the last three years. I ask all of you, have you checked your credit rating in the last year? You know what? When you look at your credit rating, wow, big surprise: Over 18% of those who checked their credit rating found serious, significant inaccuracies, to the point where they would have been denied credit for a mortgage or buying a car; 25% of people report serious problems and serious errors in their credit files. Imagine this mind-boggling statistic. As I say, it's 18% in Canada, and 25% in the United States. It's even worse there. And 79%, almost 80%—wow—found minor errors in their credit files. So there are major errors that can stop you from getting credit, and minor errors that can also cause a problem later on for you.

It is our job as guardians of our political and economic culture to ensure that Canadians understand this credit-granting system in order for them not to be taken advantage of.

I have more, but I have to speak on various items in the bill. I can't spend all my time on one because I will be running out soon.

Second, this bill also provides for truncating vital information. Here we are. Look at this: "Laptop Theft Highlights Risk to Personal Data"—8,600 teachers. How long ago? This was January 29, when 8,600 teachers' identities were stolen from the teachers' office. Imagine that. That's just one item. There are many. In fact, I've got lists upon lists upon lists of these files that were stolen. Here, a bank loses how many files? It loses 470,000 files. It's just amazing.

Consequently, what do we do? If you lose the files, shouldn't you be protected? Shouldn't you have some security in your system of credit reporting? Why not truncate that? Why not mesh out or give you another number for your birthdate, your address, your social insurance number or your driver's licence number? All of that is in the credit reporting system. Everybody's got access to it, apparently. Apparently, there is no safeguard here. It's all out on Internet sites. So why are we not insisting that the credit-granting and credit-reporting institutions, when they are sending out mail to everybody and sending out credit cards that you can just sign or just call—why not have them truncate out with different numbers and have a new system in place so that we would be protected?

A major writer, financial writer—look what I've got here from the Toronto Sun. The money editor says:

"Dear Tony:

Please, please, reintroduce your bill to protect consumers, their identity and their credit rating."

More than that, we've got the Financial Post, we've got Tyler Hamilton, we've got James Daw, we previously had Linda Leatherdale, all writing and saying, "Please do something about it. The consumer needs protection."

We're here today to do it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm really pleased to be able to make a few comments today on Bill 7, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act. I can tell you that I understand this is around the fifth time the member has introduced this bill. I'd like to make some comments similar to those our party has agreed to in the past, the same type of comments. I want to, first of all, compliment the member from Davenport. I know that he has brought this bill forward, I believe this is the fifth time.

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party and the official opposition, it is important, we feel, that this legislation is for consumer protection, and we're interested in working with the Legislature and all three parties to ensure that there are greater consumer protections in the province of Ontario.

I'd like to note at this point that the last time there were sweeping introductions of consumer protection in the province of Ontario was in 2002, under a previous, Progressive Conservative administration in which my leader today, the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, was the minister of consumer protection at the time. He brought in sweeping reforms at that time.

I might add that I am disappointed that at this point in time there are still regulations from that piece of legislation that passed in 2002, regulatory regimes that have not yet been put into place by this current government, whether it's for the bereavement sector or the auto sector, or even the Ontario racing community.

That said, while I am proud of the achievements of our previous Conservative administration under Mr. Hudak's leadership, I must say that today protecting Ontario consumers is even more important when you're looking at identity theft or Internet fraud. I think the member spoke with some fairly interesting data on just how serious this is and how serious the police services in our country take Internet fraud and identity theft.

I might also add that this is the fifth time this bill has been introduced by the member, and I encourage him to continue to raise awareness on this very important issue.

I think it speaks to his insight into what happened to him, but also to his determination for change, and to the disappointment we have on this side of the chamber that a member from the governing party, who has direct experience of identity theft, actually introduced a bill that the former Minister of Economic Development, Joe Cordiano, brought before this house and that the Liberal government wouldn't adopt this legislation.



In fact, in 2005 there was unanimous consent to try and move this piece of legislation along so that it would be speedily passed. Here we are again, five years later, a new Parliament, and we're still debating a piece of legislation that is simply long overdue.

Just to summarize for those who are just joining the debate: As defined by the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada and Industry Canada, a credit report is a snapshot of your credit history. It's one of the main tools that lenders use to decide whether or not to give you credit. This is what the bill is about. It's actually improving consumer reporting to protect people against identity fraud.

A person's credit history is recorded in files maintained by at least one of Canada's three major credit reporting agencies: Equifax, TransUnion and Northern Credit Bureau. These consumer reporting agencies are private businesses that create, maintain and sell information about you to a business that has the right to have access to your file and has paid a fee to a consumer reporting agency.

There are two classes of information which you may file at a consumer reporting agency: credit information and personal information.

As outlined by this member, his private member's bill provides that if a consumer reporting agency and any other person, such as a bank, to whom a consumer report has been provided, discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, or that such consumer information has been lost or stolen, they shall immediately inform the affected consumer.

It also outlines the duty to shorten vital information so the consumer report does not provide information relating to a consumer's personal information such as address, date of birth, social insurance number and credit card account number.

Some other key provisions include—and I think that the member who has put this piece of legislation forward five times described this to the Legislature:

- the duty to delete unconfirmed information within 30 days;

- the duty not to penalize consumers for applying for credit;

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- the duty to provide disclosure if credit is denied;

- the duty to record only inquiries resulting from applications for credit;

- the duty to report in writing only;

- the duty to retain information that is not contested legally;

- the duty not to report debts vacated after bankruptcy proceedings;

- the duty to provide a true copy of the report; and

- the duty to store and safeguard information in accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act.

As many folks here know—and I know that there are a few members who are critics or part of the government in the consumer protection sector that we've got here in the

chamber who have been part of the general government committee that has put through Bill 48. I've spoken an awful lot about Ontario becoming a credit card economy. That is why we need this legislation in particular.

I highlight some of the complexities around this, and as a result, I believe it is imperative that Ontario consumers are well informed of the issues surrounding such a complex issue in this chamber, the credit reporting system, as it has such an important impact on each of our daily lives. I really am heartened that he has brought it forward, but I just can't reiterate enough that a senior member of the Liberal caucus has brought this forward. "I remember debating the former Minister of Government and Consumer Services"—that was the previous speaker saying that, Ms. MacLeod—"on Focus Ontario and talking about the same piece of legislation" over two and a half years ago, I believe, and how important this was and the promises that the government gave us that they were going to protect consumers.

What I am frightened about as I go into my concerns about this piece of legislation is this: What we're doing here today is important, but it will actually never become law unless it is a government cabinet minister who actually brings forward this legislation. What we're doing here today is nothing more than just an educational awareness campaign. Quite honestly, the member who brought this bill forward, Mr. Ruprecht, ought to be congratulated for his persistence for the five times that he has brought this forward.

I think this is what a lot of people are genuinely concerned about when we sit in this House every Thursday afternoon, talking or debating what I consider a lot of times very important and good legislation. As recently as March 4, all of those good bills, all of that debate was basically wasted. I know I lost my Bill 32, my township of Tiny site 41 act, as a result of that. I know that this is the fifth time that Mr. Ruprecht has had to bring this bill forward. I know the same sort of thing has happened with Mr. O'Toole with the cellphone bill.

The reality is that we carry some of the government bills forward and we've got this brand new throne speech centred on the future of Ontario, we have a new budget coming out, and yet all the legislation that the private members put forward is basically dropped. I'm very curious why members of the government who speak in favour of this bill would not, at cabinet or at caucus, demand that this type of bill move forward, at least brought as a private member's bill or as a government bill itself, because obviously the member is persistent in this and I think that the House would like to see, if not this bill, a government bill move forward and be taken to committee. Let all these different organizations that believe this bill has an impact on them come to committee and make their concerns known.

I hope the government will be supporting this bill. I assume they're going to vote for it. Whether it becomes law, who knows, but I think that it will probably pass here today. However, will the government allow it to go ahead?



The general public does not have a whole grasp on consumer reporting and we must do our best, in this Legislature, to make the information as accessible as possible. For that I commend the member.

We in the Progressive Conservative Party and official opposition are delighted to see this bill. As some of you may recall, when the member first produced the bill in 2005, our member of provincial Parliament for Barrie, Joe Tascona, debated this bill. He made a few excellent points and noted that we were and remained saddened by the fact again that it was brought forward by a private member and not by a minister. We hate to see this sort of abuse of a private member when it comes to something as important as consumer protection.

But as I've stated, the Progressive Conservative Party is looking forward to continued debate on the legislation, and we thank the member for bringing it forward. As I've said many times, we only wish the government would have listened and brought it forward as well.

It's essential that this legislation receive considerable and substantial consultation with stakeholders throughout the community, all throughout Ontario, but also to make sure we have public hearings into this legislation. It is an important issue and I urge the member to talk to his cabinet and caucus and tell them to put this piece of legislation as part of government legislation.

We must hear from the affected stakeholders, the people in the province who are being ripped off in many cases and who are being defrauded. We need to protect the people of Ontario who have sent us here, and I think one of the things we should add on to this point as we close is that if we move toward implementation of the harmonized sales tax, you can be sure, if something else is going to happen, we're going to drive so much of the economy underground. You can almost see it happening now, because that extra 8%, in a lot of small construction projects or automotive repairs, may have a very negative impact on the consumer, and they will be looking for any savings they can find. That means the underground economy will likely flourish after July 1 as we implement this new Liberal tax grab.

With that, we on this side of the House will be supporting Mr. Ruprecht's bill for the fifth time. We wish the government would listen to him. They will probably support it today, but let's see if they have the courage to move it forward, bring it to committee and actually try to protect consumers in the province of Ontario who are probably demanding it now more than ever. With the difficult economy, we can't have anybody being ripped off; the government is doing enough of that on their own. Let's all get behind Mr. Ruprecht's bill, support it and get it to committee as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** New Democrats are going to support this bill on second reading, with the hope that it goes to committee. Why wouldn't it?

Having said that, I'm nowhere near as excited about it as my friend from Simcoe North. I've sat here and

listened carefully, and I admire his zeal. But the bill, with all due respect to its author, just doesn't do it for me that way.

Let me say a couple of things. This bill is probably far less about consumer reporting agencies than it is about the safekeeping of sensitive, private information. That's the real scourge that's confronting folks in this province and across the world. I have advocated, and continue to—and not all New Democrats may agree with me—that anybody who takes it upon themselves or any body that takes it upon itself to store private information, the release of which could expose a person to harm—again, we're talking about this new phrase, "identity theft," and the prospect of somebody bilking you by accessing your bank account or selling your house on you with a fake deed or accessing your credit card information and so on. My view is very clear: Should that information be obtained by anybody else to the detriment of the source of that information—in order words, the person to whom that information applies—the person who took it upon himself, either a corporate body or otherwise, to store that information should be 100% liable for any of the losses. Quite frankly, it's the classic insurance principle—in the insurance industry, they've gone way beyond this point now, especially the auto sector, which of course is rife with thieves, scoundrels and bandits; they've gone well beyond the point where they do adequate risk management.

One of the things that insurance companies historically did, especially when you're talking about its very origins in seafaring trade and so on, was ensure that their interests were protected by insisting that the insured party used appropriate safeguards. One of the important functions of the tort system is to ensure that wrongdoers are deterred from engaging in risky behaviour for fear of being found liable.

As I say, I'm not certain I speak—New Democrats don't have a clear policy on this, but I suspect my colleagues would join me. I think we should be approaching this from a far more dramatic point of view, and that is to say that anybody—bank, credit union, consumer reporting agency or retailer—who wants to collect and store information, should that information somehow get out of their hands, out of their safekeeping to the detriment of the person whose information it is, and if there is any loss to that person, then the person who was responsible for safeguarding it—in other words, imposing a very high level of trust on the person wanting to store that information. I think that would go a long way to ensuring that everything from the bank of Ontario—Lord knows we don't have it any more, but you'll recall the hemorrhage of personal information that occurred there some few years ago now. But the recurrent—heck, just a year and a half ago, one of the banks called me up and said that they had to change two of my credit cards I had with that bank. I said "Why?" and they said "Well, there has been a breach." And I said, "Well, that's interesting. Tell me where the breach was. I want to know what retailer that I might use these cards at stole my information." But they're not going to tell that to me.



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Granted, I'm an elected politician, but I'm not that stupid. I know that something is going on when the bank proactively calls me and tells me that they're going to replace my credit cards with new numbers but that they can't tell me because the bank is investigating it. Of course, being somewhat suspicious at this point, the only conclusion I can logically reach is that the breach isn't with a retailer who has a scoundrel working for it who's ripping off credit card numbers or information off the black strip, the breach is the bank itself. That's why they don't want to tell you where the source of the problem is.

Then I have to reconsider whether I want to have any credit cards that are sponsored by that bank, because I don't want to expose myself. One, it's very expensive; two, many banks will try to wiggle their way out of any responsibility for identity theft and the financial loss associated with identity theft. They will inevitably try to pin the blame on the little guy: "Oh, you didn't safeguard your pin number."

I actually sat through a committee hearing with the Ombudsman—for the credit unions; I believe it was the credit unions. The Ombudsman, in his report, talked about how, at the end of the day, they held a defrauded party whose signature was forged on one of his cheques 50% liable for the value of that cheque because he didn't go to appropriate lengths to safeguard that chequebook, to secure it, even though it was in his own home. I don't buy that stuff.

Let's get back to consumer reporting agencies. This is the low-life of the financial sector. I think Mr. Ruprecht, the author of the bill, knows that. I'm not sure he wants to say it. This goes back to the era of collection agencies. Many of these consumer reporting agencies are also collection agencies or are associated with collection agencies. These are the people that do the dunning letters and the dunning calls and harassment. In a financial climate that we are in now, where people are losing jobs and families' economic hopes and foundations are collapsing, it becomes all that much more rife.

You see, one of the problems to begin with—because it's not only the world of collection agencies and consumer reporting agencies, it's also the world of the finance companies, the 28.9-percenters, the finance companies who buy the paper of furniture stores that advertise "One year, no interest." Because, you see, almost inevitably the retailer, even a large chain, doesn't hold that paper; they sell it for X number of cents on the dollar and they sell it to a company that's—be it Wells Fargo, any number of these companies. Back in days gone by, it used to be that Household Finance was the big one. Banks didn't give consumer credit, so families, little people had to go to the finance company if they wanted to buy some furniture or a car or do some repairs to their house. You couldn't go to the bank and get a loan.

One of the other problems here is, I suppose life is easier, life is a little more pleasant in small-town Ontario. It's a little harder to commit identity theft down where I come from: in Wainfleet or Port Colborne or Welland or Thorold.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Because everyone recognizes you, Peter.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, everybody knows who you are. You walk into the credit union, and people know who are you. People know each other: people have relationships. As a matter of fact, in these hard times right now, it's the credit union that is stepping up to the plate and protecting a lot of the interests of some of the families that have been hard hit by job losses and are being a little more flexible. Quite frankly, I shouldn't restrict it to the credit unions because in smaller-town Ontario the bank staff will do the same thing for you. You can cover a cheque with a telephone call.

And one of the things I used to remark on many years ago back when I used to practise law—and the operative word could be "practise"; I'm not sure. You'll have to talk to some former clients. Many clients who were charged with NSF cheques—the presumption at law was that an NSF cheque was a fraud. One of the things that used to bother me was that a whole lot of times it would be a single mother with no job, on mother's allowance, as we called it, who would do the NSF cheque. The retailer was—and, granted, in small-town Ontario it was usually a small retailer. They're the ones who took the cheques; the big chain stores didn't, by and large. It was basically using the criminal justice system as a collection agency. One of the things that bothered me was that the fact is, if I should bounce a cheque, inevitably—and it has happened from time to time—the retailer calls me apologetically and says, "Oh, Mr. Kormos, what happened here?" When a welfare mom bounces a cheque, they call the police, and the police proceed with criminal process. I've always found that to be a rather perverse sort of thing.

One of the things that we should be concerned about is what's going on here with the high-interest credit companies and the high-interest credit cards. The reason why you can be given a credit card on-site in any number of retail stores with just a 30-second wait is because they don't give a tinker's damn what your ability is to pay off your credit card balance. They're simply interested in getting the credit cards out there. The high interest rate is what covers them. People who are paying their accounts pay for the sins of the people who can't afford to pay for their accounts, but the company doesn't care, either at the onset or at the end, because it's covering its losses with the good payers, because it isn't doing adequate—and it's not a matter of checking credit, I say to the member for Davenport, it's a matter of checking capacity to pay, isn't it? And it's a matter of ensuring that people aren't given credit limits that are so high that they are lured into taking their card up to that limit, to the point where there's simply no capacity whatsoever.

It's the credit card issuer whose minimum payment is 3% of the total balance or less—which seems oh, so attractive, especially when you are in desperate straits, but takes you into a world of high interest and compounded interest that again would make the Tony Soprano loan sharks blush in terms of the way that they can ravage and savage a little person's income and life.



All I'm trying to indicate is that there's more here than meets the eye. We support the legislation. I look forward to it going to committee. I don't know whether the government is going to allow that to happen. The member who sponsored this bill, Mr. Ruprecht, is as faithful a caucus member as one could ever find, and he certainly deserves to have this bill move along into committee so the public can comment on it, after—what?—five tries, five efforts? His tenacity is worthy of note. After five efforts, you'd think the Premier's office would clear the path for him. I, for the life of me, couldn't see why not.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** Just before I get into my remarks, I want to thank my friend the member for Davenport for his relentless leadership on this very important issue and his very hard work, and our colleagues from Simcoe North and from Welland, both of whom I thought gave very intelligent and insightful comments on this proposal.

I would like to start, in the very few minutes I have, just to share with you my own personal story. I think it's indicative of all of the holes in the current system. I got a phone call one day from a collection agency saying I owed a large big-box retailer over \$5,000—a big-box retailer I'd never shopped at in a community I had never visited. So I decided, because I was a columnist with the Toronto Star at the time, to pretend I was applying to this retailer for one of their credit cards, and this is what happened:

"I called the Best Buy in Whitby because I couldn't believe that it would be that easy.

"The phone rang only twice and a crisp young voice answered, 'Best Buy. Can I help you?' I asked about how I could get a Best Buy credit card. The very chipper voice said that all I needed was a driver's licence and a major credit card. 'What if I don't have a driver's licence?' I asked. Don't worry. I was covered if I had my social insurance number ... and some proof of my home address.

I asked how long it would take to get the card, and she cheerfully said, "Two to four minutes." She assured me that, as she explained, I would also be issued a temporary account card I could use that same day. I sarcastically said, "How convenient."

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That explained how on October 2, 2006, it took just two to four minutes to become a victim of identity theft and credit card fraud. A person pretending to be me filled out a Best Buy credit card application with the wrong birth date. They offered two phone numbers; one phone number was the general number for the University of Toronto and the other one was not even in service.

Nothing was done to verify the person's identity beyond accepting the SIN. The application was sent to Wells Fargo, which handles Best Buy's credit cards. It used the SIN to check with the credit bureau. As I had a very good credit record, the card was authorized. No further steps were taken to ensure that the person applying was actually me.

Emboldened and now armed with one credit card, the impostor marched to the Whitby Home Depot and repeated the crime. Within a few hours, the Best Buy card was maxed out and the Home Depot one had a few thousand dollars charged against it. The cards require no down payment, and these retailers require no payments for months, sometimes up to three years. The better part of a year would go by before there would be any record of delinquency on any of these cards.

I only discovered the crime in August a year later, when the collection agency had called about overdue accounts. I then called the retailers to find out how this happened, and was told over and over by the people at Home Depot and Best Buy and their respective finance providers—Citi Cards Canada and Wells Fargo—that they would never give out a credit card based on a SIN and a home address. I spent hours investigating only to find out that that's indeed exactly what had happened.

Then I found out the credit card bureaus had been notified of these unpaid bills, and my credit rating was dramatically downgraded. The retailers who rush to give out easy credit require no payments for the better part of a year and ask for little proof of identity, and have made credit card fraud and identity theft one of the easiest crimes to commit in Ontario. No amount of evidence from me in the aftermath of this was sufficient to expunge my credit record.

The absurdity is that the victim of the crime has to rely on the same lax retailers and finance companies to clear their name with the credit bureau. There is no chipper voice from Best Buy telling you that they can clear this matter up in two to four minutes.

What makes me angry is that this could happen to you or me, any member of this House, our friends, our families, our constituents. As my friend from Davenport pointed out earlier, credit card fraud affects 270,000 accounts.

I'm just going to sum up. I'm going to take 30 seconds more, simply to say this: Because of the delay, when I went back, the only way I could expunge my record was to press charges. Two years later or a year later, any evidence was gone. All the tapes the companies keep had now been erased. The police officer investigating it at the Toronto Police Service had been turned down for four years in his applications to the Toronto Police Service because he had been twice the victim of credit fraud and couldn't join the police service because of his credit, actually.

We have to do something about this. I hope this will get rolled up into government legislation soon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I just wanted to say this: I sincerely hope this bill not only gets passed here but also, as my colleague indicated earlier, that it goes to committee. This entire industry, this business of keeping credit records, is what has to be investigated because therein lies the problem. I believe that the kind of personal information that's being kept is something that we as a



Legislature have to investigate. The way that information is used and released to merchants across this province is something that needs a second look. Let's get this bill to committee and let's do our work as a Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity.

The member from Davenport has been working on this, as pointed out by the member from Welland, for quite some time. I agree with the member from Newmarket-Aurora, who says, "Let's get this to committee and get to work." I don't think there's anyone in here who hasn't heard one of these stories in their ridings about identity theft or the credit rating system or, "Something's going on here," and I think we're on to something.

I think the member from Welland offers us some sound advice, and that is, we've got to dig deeper, peel the onion back even further to get to the bottom of this. But the member from Davenport deserves our credit, our thanks and our gratitude for telling us continually, on and on, about the horror stories that are out there and about finding a solution.

So here is what he wants to do. The act amends the Consumer Reporting Act and prescribes the following things:

You're required, as a duty, to inform about missing or stolen information. How many of you have not even been informed about stuff that's been stolen?

The duty to truncate vital information: That is in itself an important aspect of how much information is made available to be flipped around to so many people. So the proper, truncated information that does flow needs to be done.

The duty to delete unconfirmed information within 30 days: Do you realize that unconfirmed information can be provided and stays on that record if it's not been substantiated at all? What's with that?

There's a duty not to penalize customers for applying for credit; a duty to provide full disclosure if the credit is denied; a duty to record only inquiries resulting from applications for credit; a duty to report in writing only; a duty to retain information that is not contested legally; a duty to report debts vacated after bankruptcy proceedings; a duty to provide a true copy of the report; and a duty to store and safeguard information in accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act of Canada.

There's story after story of identity theft, of this credit issue. If you don't understand the credit system, you can be taken advantage of in a very serious way. We don't have the time to decide to read the fine print, which we know there is sometimes reams of, but we assume that these companies are looking out for our best interests, and in some cases they are not.

We have no law that says if the credit file has been compromised, an agency or a bank must inform the consumer. We have no existing safeguards against identity theft when it comes to credit files. People often lament that their credit scores are so inaccurate and false

that they are unable to get a loan. All of that would be taken care of to some degree. Why I want this to go to committee is precisely why the member has been asking us to do this time and time again. I'm hearing in this place that there is support for that. I too will add my voice to supporting getting this bill to committee and actually getting this bill to work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member from Davenport.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Like many others who spoke before me, I want to lend my support and congratulate the member from Davenport for his determination in bringing this issue again and again to this House. Hopefully this time this bill will pass and see the light and also help and serve the people of Ontario.

It's just like many across the province of Ontario facing difficulties as a result of identity theft. We hear about it on a regular basis. It happened to me a long time ago. My wife looked after the account. One time, she came to me and asked me, "Hey, Khalil, since when do you gamble? You spent \$3,500 in gambling at a betting place in England." I didn't know anything about it. I'd never been there. I don't know how to play the game. So I went and talked to the bank and they verified it; they returned my money. But many others lose their money.

I was talking to my colleague here, the member from Bramalea. He was telling me the same story. It's happened to him. Some people used his name, stole his identity and borrowed money and almost cost him \$8,000. The most important thing is, it's not about losing the money. Sometimes you don't know anything about it and you lose your credit rating. When you want to go buy a house or apply for a loan, you won't be eligible to buy or to get the loan because your credit has a black mark around it because you didn't pay back a loan which you didn't know anything about.

That's why it's important for all of us to continue to talk about this issue and to pass this bill: because it's important for all of us to create some kind of protection mechanism for the people of Ontario who are victims of identity theft, which happens on a regular basis.

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As the member from Davenport mentioned, you can receive a credit card in the mail and the company will tell you, "Just phone and activate your account," and that's it—you have a credit card. They'll give you \$5,000, \$10,000. It could be you, it could be somebody else. As the member from Toronto Centre mentioned a few minutes ago, it happened to him. It happens to many others across the province of Ontario on a daily basis.

I think it's our obligation as elected officials, as the people who make the rules and laws in this province, to create a mechanism to protect the people who look to us to be protected and who seek some kind of support or regulations to regulate this industry.

I know it's difficult. I was listening to the member from Welland talking about the difficulties from a



technical and legal point of view. As a lawyer, he always looks to the legalities and technicalities, which are very difficult. Sometimes it's a federal jurisdiction, sometimes it's an international jurisdiction—because some of these are global companies. But the most important thing, from our point of view as Ontarians, is to regulate this industry in the province of Ontario and create a protection mechanism for many thousands and thousands of people who, on a regular basis, are losing their identity to others. It creates problems for them and for their families and for their credit.

Again, I want to congratulate the member from Davenport. I'm going to vote in support of his bill because it's important for all of us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Davenport, Mr. Ruprecht, has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Thank you very much to the members from London—Fanshawe, Brant and Newmarket—Aurora. Thank you to the member for Toronto Centre for sharing his experience with credit card fraud; and to the member for Welland for explaining the details of his own experience with credit cards; and to the member from Simcoe North for going deeper into the complexities of Bill 7.

Two points very quickly: One, I have three notices from three different banks here, and I don't have bank accounts there, yet they tell me that my banking is temporarily blocked, that my account has been suspended. I don't even bank with them, so something is out there that is very strange—Canada Trust, same thing; BMO Financial Group, same thing. Something is wrong. It's out there. It's in cyberspace.

Finally, let me make one important point, and that is the gall of it all. Here is Allstate. It says they're going to give us a one-year free identity theft guarantee of some kind, if we only pay. There are 1.5 million Canadians who are now paying for protection against identity theft when the very institutions that we trust to be the keepers of our financial records are supposed to give us that information free. Why are 1.5 million Canadians paying for identity theft guarantees—it really can't be guaranteed, but it sounds like it; it's right here.

So I find it very strange and I find it very informative that somehow insurance companies or banks or credit unions now have another way to gouge the public. This is nothing more than gouging the public, because we're all afraid of losing our credit rating, losing our protection. This cannot be right. That's why it is really very important that this bill see the light of day in committee so we can protect our consumers in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will vote on Mr. Ruprecht's ballot item in about 50 minutes.

#### MAIL DELIVERY

**Mr. David Ramsay:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls upon the federal Minister of Transport to issue a directive

to the Canada Post Corp. to amend the Consumer Choice program to allow the delivery of unaddressed mail sent by provincial members of Parliament and municipal councillors, as is the case with federal members of Parliament.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. David Ramsay:** Compared to the other bills that were introduced today, this is really of quite small consequence. In fact, it really kind of involves just us here, in a great respect. But it's something that I just found out accidentally through going on with my duties as an MPP. It sort of stuck in my craw that there was a sense of injustice here for the duly elected officials across this country, whether you be at the federal level, the provincial level or the municipal level.

What I discovered was that there's a great program that Canada Post has that I certainly support called Consumer Choice that allows people to block unaddressed mail if they don't want to receive it. That's what we usually call in the vernacular "junk mail." I happen to like this stuff myself. I'm a Canadian flyer guy, and I look forward to it every week. I check out what the tires are on sale for, and I look at everything else. I even do a lot of the food shopping at home, so I look at the grocery store flyers too. I happen to like it. But I understand there's a lot of it; in some cases, there's too much of it. Certainly people have the right to say, "I don't want to receive that."

So it's good that Canada Post has that policy, and I certainly support that. I support people's right to have that stopped. In that Consumer Choice policy, though, Canada Post has some exemptions to it, ones that are very logical, like the returning officer, both federal and provincial. The returning officer has to be able to communicate with the resident at election time to get voting information. Maybe it's not addressed, and they just send out a general card, because you need to know where the voting place is and to alert people that elections are going on. That's very important.

The other exemption they have is for our federal members of Parliament's householders. They also get delivered to the households. But for the provincial members of Parliament and municipal councillors across the country, that is blocked. I just think that's patently unfair. If Canada Post feels that the federal members' information should get through, I think also that they should respect municipal councillors who are duly elected and work hard for their ratepayers and provincial members of Parliament, MLAs as they're called everywhere else across this country. I think their information should also get forwarded to the households.

Normally you wouldn't know about this. First of all, I would just say that I'm not a big householder person myself. I guess when I was first elected a long time ago, I'd send out quite a few. We have special budgets for this now. Then I really got more into direct mail with people. When people had issues, I certainly made note of their



address, and I kept them informed through letter about their issue and how it was developing. I found that was a more effective way of communicating.

But over time, I found that it is a good idea, from time to time, whether I'm asking people's opinion about policies or trying to make the householder informative. Probably in the last 10 years, I've maybe sent four or five out. I did one on energy conservation and told everybody about all the programs that are there.

I remember when the electricity and natural gas sales were changing about 10 years ago, I sent out a brochure of questions you needed to ask when somebody came to the door. It's interesting that this has all come back now, and I've been working on that issue from the other end after that policy.

Last year, I did something very unusual. We had a very big event in our riding: The International Plowing Match was held, for the first time, in northern Ontario. We had a small organization and a small budget. I went to them and said, "I can send out a householder to every household in the community, and I could put in information about the plowing match for you, so that would help you spread the word." We did that. I presumed everybody would have received it. I didn't know it at the time, but I guess they didn't.

Anyway, a few months back, an issue came up that somebody had asked me about. A historian in my area had asked me to look into why Timiskaming is spelled with an "i" by the provincial government, but the lake and the newspaper that's over 100 years old are Temiskaming with an "e." So we looked into it, and we saw that in the 1920s, there was a spelling error. It was a typo in the consolidated act that was made. Once I found that out, I thought, "You know what? Maybe I had better consult with the public before I just decide on my own we're just going to fix this." Even myself, for almost 25 years now, I've been the member for Timiskaming with an "i," and it's the Timiskaming Health Unit with an "i." A lot of people have that spelling. We have these two spellings up there.

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We found out what it was, so I decided, "Why don't I consult?" I thought that the best way to do that, the easiest way for me, is, I'll send out a postage reply card to every household in the geographic district of Timiskaming, about a third of my riding, to see what people thought. There was a lot of publicity about this. There were people writing in; everybody was interested; and people were discussing the history. I made it happen and sent the thing out.

Then I started to get a bunch of calls at my offices: "Hey, how come I didn't get one?" I said, "I don't know," because we had made sure every household was to get one. Then we found out about this consumer's choice policy of Canada Post, and that if you decide to block unaddressed mail, that also included any unaddressed mail from a municipal councillor and a provincial member of Parliament. So they didn't get that, either; in fact, they don't get some of the community news-

papers that are unaddressed that have flyers in them too. But that's their choice.

When I looked into that, I was kind of angry that the post office was doing that. I found out about the consumer's choice policy of Canada Post and how it had a few exemptions in it, including the federal members of Parliament.

I really thought that was unfair. I don't know the origins of that. I think it probably goes way back, so it's not to be blamed on any government or whatever; this is not a partisan issue. But what we'll have to do is just ask the federal government of the day to instruct Canada Post to amend that policy to also exempt, to be fair, MLAs across this country, and municipal councillors. I find the municipal mail I get here in Toronto very helpful. Usually the councillors talk about water conservation and energy conservation. There's a lot of useful information there.

I think it's important that we who are duly elected have free access to our voters, to pass on information. Some people want to send straight self-promotional material. That's their business. My experience is, most members of the House want to send useful information to people. Regardless of what it is, that's our choice as elected officials. And, to be fair, to be equitable, I think elected officials in all three levels of government across this country should have their mail received by their voters.

That's the case. I don't think I have to take all my time to make that argument. I would just ask all the members to support that.

I understand, because this involves another jurisdiction, that if this passes the House it will be up to me to write Minister Baird, whom I consider to be a friend. I know he stood over there five years ago and mentioned the birth of my grandson when he was born. My daughter and my grandson have a copy of that Hansard, when he mentioned that in the House. That's what I would do if this passes today, and I would hope that the federal government would listen and ask Canada Post to amend their policy so that elected officials at all three levels of government in this country are allowed to have their unaddressed mail delivered to ratepayers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I was speaking with my colleague here, wondering how the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane could fill 12 minutes, speaking to this profound resolution, but I do want to thank him for bringing it forward.

I must admit I struggled, when I first saw it, with what it meant and what the intention was. I wasn't even aware that there was a difference between provincial and municipal unaddressed mail and federal mail.

Knowing Minister Baird as I do, I couldn't for one minute accuse him of doing this intentionally, of leaving out the provincial Legislatures or the municipal—because if he had done that intentionally, I think he would have gone the distance to, say, just allow Conservative



MPs' unaddressed mail to go through. We know that that's not in the nature of Minister Baird. I'm sure that, should this House agree to pass this resolution, when he gets the letter from Mr. Ramsay, his reaction will probably be similar to mine: "I can't believe that this is actually happening." He'll waste no time whatsoever. He'll send the directive and Mr. Ramsay will be getting all of his unaddressed mail that he so enjoys reading.

In all seriousness, I think this is very similar to the rights that we have as individuals who seek public office. During a writ period, we will often come up against a condominium or an apartment building, and of course, it says "No soliciting." None of would put ourselves into the category of a solicitor. In fact, I got a standing ovation in my first public meeting when I was asked back in 1995, "Are you a lawyer?" and I said no. I got a standing ovation. The last thing we want to be accused of is being just mere solicitors. Of course, we know that because it's an important message that we're carrying as public servants, that's the reason that we are then given access to apartments. And we know we're not soliciting; we're actually bringing the good news of what it is the Progressive Conservative Party is going to do for the people of this province—or those of you who think that there is good news that maybe the NDP or the Liberal Party would bring forward. It's a matter of public service.

I really do think in terms of the importance of getting the message out, especially today. Many, many years ago, you could communicate very effectively, for example, in a newspaper. I know some of my colleagues still have the privilege of having a regular column in small community newspapers. They don't have to pay for that. In fact, the newspaper welcomes that, it's printed on a regular basis, and it's a way for members to get their message out. In the urban areas, that's something that isn't available to us in the same way.

I'm very fortunate in Newmarket–Aurora. I represent the municipality of Newmarket as well as the municipality of Aurora. Aurora has a weekly newspaper called *The Auroran*. Its owner, publisher and editor is a friend—he has been for many years—by the name of Ron Wallace. Ron Wallace ran a headline when I first sought the nomination for what was then the York–Mackenzie riding. Ron found out that this guy, Frank Klees, was running for the nomination, so the headline in the paper that he was associated with at the time was "Frank Who?" He went on to say, "Who is this guy to think that he would actually win a nomination in this riding? No one really knows who he is. He doesn't have any political experience." He went on to basically tear me to shreds. How wrong he was.

It was actually that column that gave me my start in politics, because people said, "Frank who?" And from that point on, when people asked who I was, I just said "Frank Who."

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** The next line: "Frank, that's who."

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Frank, that's who.

Here's the point: My good friend Ron, being the responsible editor and publisher that he is, actually does

invite me to write columns, and they are important public service columns; the other newspaper in my riding doesn't. In fact, just for the exercise I went through this. I took the column and I asked my staff to find out how much it would cost me to run the same column in the *Newmarket Era Banner*, because they won't take it as a free column. The response was \$1,500 for one edition. So there's something else. I mean, I can't afford to pay \$1,500 to run one column. I think if my constituents found out that that's how I was spending my communications budget, which is tax dollars, they wouldn't think that that is a good use of that money.

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So I have to rely on *The Auroran* to get that message out, and I'm grateful to Ron Wallace and *The Auroran* for the opportunity they give me to communicate important messages about what's happening in the Legislature that is of public interest. Again, to Mr. Ramsay's point, these flyers or these direct mail pieces we put out that we use to get important information about what is happening in the Legislature, are one of the ways we have of reaching out to the more than 100,000 residents we have in our various ridings.

I think this is simply common sense. It's a good measure. I wish you good luck with Minister Baird. As I said, knowing him, and knowing his sense of what is right and his support for democracy, he will respond immediately.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm going to take a somewhat contrary view about this. I know the federal Parliament just voted to eliminate their so-called ten-percenters. You see, this motion would be a lot more appealing to me if it called upon the federal government not to exclude federal government politicians' materials from the ban. I don't know about you, Speaker, but it's incredibly frustrating to get home on a Thursday evening or a Friday morning—sometimes a Saturday morning—and find that the grey box in front of the house—it's up on the porch, and the neighbours take care of this stuff—full of really cheesy, cheap paper stuff from obscure federally elected Conservative people from northern British Columbia.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** The Liberals have them too.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, no, the cheesy ones. They've got the burglar breaking into houses with one of those little cat burglar masks on, one of those Zorro masks. They use "Crime" with three exclamation marks. They have all the finesse of a *National Inquirer* headline. These things end up in the grey box. Down on Bald Street, in this little community of Bald Street people where I am blessed to live between Ms. Rosie and Ms. Cheel, they're very conscientious about the blue box and grey box, and take care of my blue box and grey box.

This stuff is just stupid. I suppose I should put myself on the "do not drop off" list, but then I'm torn, because of course we want to support postal workers and the job they do, at least for most of the community.

I'm surprised that the motion wouldn't express some concern about subdivision after subdivision being built



where people are buying expensive homes, paying huge municipal taxes and not getting any mail delivery at all. It boggles the mind. You've got them in your community too. Why these people aren't surrounding federal government offices with their pitchforks boggles the mind. They buy nice, new houses—I like my old house, but I get my mail delivered to my door once a day five days a week. These people have to go to crummy little post boxes out in the middle of a field with the wind blowing in the wintertime and snow drifts as high as the box and keys that break off because it's cold out. Why the motion wouldn't call upon the federal government to bring proper postal delivery service—I'm not talking rural routes. Heck, rural routes do better, because at least you've got the mail person coming by in a car with right-hand drive and dropping off the mail in the box and swinging your box out so that the snowplow can knock it off the post once the snow gets high enough.

For the life of me, I say to the author of this motion, why would you want somebody who is concerned about getting junk mail to have to get your mail when you expect their vote? If somebody doesn't want unaddressed mail, I don't want my householder delivered to them, because I'm going to operate on the assumption that they may not like me, but at least they don't dislike me. But once they start getting the householder in their mail slot after they thought they had banned unaddressed mail, they're going to despise me.

Now, you may have different goals in your career than I do. I suppose if one wants a graceful exit from this life, to simply get defeated in the next provincial election is one of the ways of doing it. But I don't begrudge you, notwithstanding that you belong to your party and I belong to mine, the right to maintain as healthy a relationship as you possibly can in your community with the voters. It seems to me that by forcing your junk mail on them you're not helping.

Our householders are far more restrained than federal householders. You've noticed that the federal government's householders are the most partisan things you could ever encounter. It seems that from time to time maybe Mr. Ramsay is slipping the occasional partisan content through as well. I'm not sure; I don't know how you can possibly do it. But the federal stuff is just incredibly partisan. Have you ever tested your market? Because people get so much stuff now that unless they're so socially inept that they haven't got anybody live to talk to and they spend whole Saturday mornings poring through the—look, I know people who are coupon clippers, but they're selective. They know where to go, and then the rest, boom, gets grey-boxed. I'm not averse to a Canadian Tire special either. But you pick out Canadian Tire from the bundle, and the other stuff is grey-boxed, in any event. If politicians think this is effective communication with constituents, they've got another think coming.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Let them keep thinking that.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** They obviously do. They're going to shove these pamphlets down people's throats

whether they want them or not, whether they read them or not.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** “Oh,” Mr. Ramsay says. Your brother-in-law and your sister and their kids don't count. I'm talking about the general public, because you can send out a mailing like this—and they're not cheap; the taxpayer pays for them—and at the end of the day, if you tested your community—let's say you raised a new issue. I'm not talking about reinforcing a local issue that's already hot. For instance, if I sent out a door-to-door piece down in the east end of Welland where the government is trying to shut down Crowland Central school—you know, Crowland is the east-end rural part of Welland, Lyons Creek, a historic community. You've got Crowland Central school that has been there for decades and decades. It's also a community centre. Now you've got this government trying to shut it down and bus these kids from this very unique, traditional rural community, bus them for hours each day to and from an urban school because somehow somebody's got the impression that these kids aren't being well served out in the country. I beg to differ.

If I were to send a householder out there talking about how mischievous Mr. McGuinty was being and how delinquent he was, and how Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals were abandoning families in rural Ontario, and if the householder were to mention the fact that the Minister of Education won't come to the support of those families and their kids in those communities that are losing their small-town schools, there would be a great response. But that's not the test. The test is to generate a new issue and just see how many people actually bother reading it. I don't think there are a whole lot of folks who read this stuff, but tell you what: Don't rely upon the junk mail process. Mr. Ramsay, I think that when you've got a householder like that, and if you feel you're being—I'll tell you what happens down in Welland.

As you know, people canvass during election times. I was just telling Mr. Klees that I've got some canvassers who, heck, were working for Mel Swart before me, and that was 24, 25 and 26 years ago. They know enough that if they knock on a door and wait, and knock again a little harder, and a guy shows up dripping wet with a towel around his waist and a miserable look on his face, my canvassers know enough to say, “Hi. I'm here on behalf of the Liberal candidate.” That's called talent, skill. You don't pick it up the first day out canvassing, but you pick it up in relatively short order. If you want your folks to get your junk mail, deliver it yourself.

But I'm going to stand up for the people who don't like the piles and piles and piles of junk mail. I'm going to stand up for the folks who don't like being interrupted in the middle of their dinner hour with a phone call from—again, where's Mr. Ruprecht?—obscure credit card companies or companies that want to consolidate their debt or sell them an electricity source or a natural gas source. Or the people who work shifts, if they are working at all—down where I come from, there aren't a



whole lot of people working shifts any more, because of course there are no jobs, and that's a problem. But the people who work shifts—and never mind working shifts. What about the single mom who works two jobs and is in bed by 7:30 at night because she has to be up at 4:30 or 5 in the morning? That phone call at 8 o'clock or 8:30, which is still considered prime calling time by the telephone solicitors, is the most irritating thing in the world. I think she has a right to have herself put on a do-not-call list, and I think folks have a right to have themselves put on a do-not-mail list.

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You're not going to see me voting for the motion. I'm not going to make a big deal out of it. I'm not going to send a letter that opposes yours to John Baird, because, quite frankly, I think at this point John Baird, with his new salary, with a pensionable job, with a position in cabinet, isn't going to be moved by a resolution of this chamber. It's just unlikely to happen, but I admire the effort.

I suppose there are going to be people here who are grateful for what you're doing for them, other MPPs, but from electoral perspectives they don't live in your ridings. There are going to be municipal councillors across the province, although most municipal councillors don't do this because, at least where I come from, they don't have the kinds of budgets that allow them to do householders. That's George Smitherman's turf now with those huge discretionary budgets that allow city councillors to—down where I come from, city councillors don't do householders. Down where I come from, you go to the market square on Saturday morning, you go to the church hall on Saturday evening and on Sunday afternoon, and you talk with people. You don't send out 10%-percenters.

I appreciate—well, I'm not sure of the motive; that's the problem. I was going to say I appreciate the motive, but I'm not sure of the motive. I'm not sure whose interest is being represented here. The interest of democracy? I don't think so. You've got a constituency office. Presumably it's open at least four days a week, four and a half days a week, maybe five. You've got staff who probably work a lot harder than their elected members. I think that's fair to say about most of our staffs. I know Alex Roman—I've known him for a good chunk of time—certainly does, and with great talent. I'm envious of Mr. Klees for having him. I've got good staff of my own, but Alex Roman's a great staff person. So you've got staff who answer and take care of people's problems ticking people off with yet more paper.

The Welland Tribune, now owned by Sun Media, gives away the Friday paper on Saturday, because they simply can't sell them. They wedge it between the storm door and the wood door, and all it does is cause drafts in the wintertime. Enough of that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** It's an enjoyable debate and it seems like this afternoon is a wonderful afternoon. Most of the members agreed on the topic being debated and discussed in this place.

I want to support the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane for his motion, because it's important. All of us want to communicate with our constituents. We're not talking about forcing people to take our information; we're talking about equal opportunity. When we deliver any piece of communication from our provincial side, it always has to be non-partisan; otherwise the assembly won't pay for it, unlike our federal cousins, who can include in their communications a lot of partisan issues and it still passes and is still delivered to every household.

You have to appreciate, when you live in cities like London and Toronto, that sometimes when we use those local StarMail companies or local distributors, they're not allowed to go into buildings. That's why, I guess, to send our information, to communicate with our constituents, we have to use Canada Post. Sometimes, as the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane mentioned, we're excluded; we're being considered as junk mail. It's not like a piece of information that deserves to go to the end user, which is our constituent. That's why I think it's important to talk about equal opportunity. It's not abusing the system.

The member from Welland was mentioning that if I need to communicate with my constituents, I have to go and knock on their doors. We do that every once in a while. We do that when we get a chance to go back to our ridings. We knock on doors, we take our information with us, but sometimes, as the author of this motion said, you have to discuss very important issues concerning all the residents. It's impossible to visit 45,000 households, which is the number of households in my riding—to go to every door and talk to everyone. That is why we use Canada Post. We send them the information and we expect an answer back from our constituents. There are many different issues concerning their ridings and the issues we debate in this House. That is why the most important thing is to allow us, as elected officials on the provincial side, alongside our friends on the council side—city members—to send information to our constituents and seek their opinions on those important matters.

I think the member from Newmarket-Aurora mentioned that he's going to write the federal member to seek his opinion and hopefully approval to allow us, as members, to send communications to our constituents—not being stopped, not being considered junk mail.

I want to congratulate the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane for bringing to us very important information and important issues, because I didn't know that before. Most of the time my constituents tell me, "How come I didn't receive this information from you? How come you didn't ask my opinion? I want to participate." I didn't know that until you brought this issue to our attention. I think it's very important in order to communicate with our constituents in a professional and efficient and timely manner. I think we should be allowed to send our information to our constituents and not be considered junk mail. I think it's fair to have equal opportunity, like our federal partners.



As I said, and I'll repeat again, when we send our communications, they're empty of any partisan issue and any partisan titles or descriptions because the assembly of Ontario won't pay for it. So unlike the federal members—it's full of partisan stuff and it still goes through and it is still received by our constituents.

Congratulations to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for bringing this very important issue to us. I want to support your motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane's resolution. Let me make a comment about the member from Welland first, before I come to what your concerns are.

The member from Welland offers us some divergent logic behind his non-support for the motion, but I will acknowledge to him the logic that it is only but one tool. I think he diminishes the tool. I'm going to respectfully differ with his opinion. I think it's one of the tools that if you don't use it you may be avoiding some opportunities to communicate with some people who do like the tool. So not so quick to throw it out the door.

I will correct him on one thing. I don't think he meant to say this because I think he realizes that the 10-percenter was not removed. The 10-percenter—throwing it out of your riding—has been removed at the federal level, because there was that practice that particularly the present government was using, telling members from Alberta to send to Brant—to use their 10-percenter. So I think he knows that's a little bit different than what the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane is talking about, because he's talking about individually, in our own ridings, the capacity for all three levels of government to have a level playing field when it comes to the delivery of these pieces of information.

My intention would be to—except to extend to the member from Kenora–Rainy River the opportunity to send him some love mail whenever I get a chance, to see if he can respond to the government standing from a very respectful way.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane has often offered us the opportunity to right what—I think the member from Newmarket–Aurora indicated that he believed that Minister Baird would not knowingly do this and it would not be a tactic but an oversight. I'm looking forward to not only supporting this resolution and seeing it pass, but, if it passes, to see if a letter will correct that oversight. I think it's fair that both the federal, provincial and municipal level of politicians be provided an opportunity to communicate using that one tool because, as has been pointed out, there are many other tools to communicate.

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I agree with the member from Welland that going to the market, going to the events, going to the weekend festivals and talking to people first-hand is probably, first and foremost, the most personal, but the other tools—email, websites, all of those things, plus the mailers—are

an important tool of the communication with the community.

The member has my support. The member has touched on something that he fell upon, I would hazard a guess, that absolutely none of us knew was part of the regulatory stream, and with a letter, if we can get it corrected, I'm in favour of it. So I want to thank the member for bringing this forward.

One differential between the federal, provincial and municipal levels is that at the provincial and the municipal levels, we have to take that out of our own personal budgets. They get a budget set aside for them to use that 10-percenter, as it's called. But having said that, it's our choice to spend that money, and if we do, we want to make sure we're getting a bang for our buck and that it doesn't get delivered into the recycling box without us even knowing. So I think the member's on to something that I support 100%.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** First of all, I should mention that our good friend Mr. Kormos was referencing the 10-percenters. This is simply not applicable today. We trust the federal government to do what is right, and we leave those concerns with them and it's inappropriate for me to speak to them.

I'm very pleased that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, David Ramsay, has given us, the Legislature, the opportunity to debate this issue. As provincial elected representatives, we have the same basic goals as other levels of government, and that's to communicate with the residents of our riding.

Under the federal consumer choice program, lovingly known as junk mail, elected representatives' mail is the only unaddressed mail that Canada Post will continue to fully deliver. Among the few exemptions are the federal members of Parliament, but not mailings from provincial legislators or municipal councillors. I should note that Canada Post's website doesn't even warn you that provincial members' mail isn't going through.

Like most members in this House, one way that I communicate with my constituents in Ajax–Pickering is through regular newsletters. My MPP newsletter delivers news of joint effort, provincial, federal and municipal infrastructure projects that are under way and also promotes community groups in our riding, as well as event listings and various environmental and community initiatives.

Like all Ontarians, residents of Ajax and Pickering hold health care as a high priority. My newsletter continually announces the hospital expansions that are continually taking place in Ajax–Pickering, including the just-opened emergency room expansion, the first in 25 years, and the opening of the complex continuing care unit, which happened this past week with 30 new beds.

Ajax and Pickering residents would want to know that their hospital just got better and where their provincial tax dollars are going. Unfortunately, I have no way of knowing who will actually get this information, although



we assume that our provincial correspondence is in capable hands with Canada Post.

What MPP Ramsay is asking for is the federal government to reconsider, under Canada Post, a part of the Consumer Choice program that would allow us as provincially elected representatives to have our unaddressed newsletters, calendars and other correspondence to get to all of our constituents.

Last year, I had a problem involving a good friend in Ajax-Pickering. This constituent had not received two previous unaddressed mail pieces from me. He hadn't received either and wondered why I had skipped him. It was only recently that we discovered he was on the federal government's Consumer Choice list opting out of certain mail. He still received mail from my federal member and good friend Mark Holland, so he assumed that if I sent out correspondence, he would receive it also. Not so. The problem here was, my good friend thought Canada Post's policy did not apply to his elected members.

I, like David Ramsay, wonder how many more constituents are inadvertently severing vital communication with their provincial representatives.

Hypothetically, imagine my federal counterpart and I both release 45,000 newsletters to our householders in our riding. Let's presume that there are 6,000 individuals listed on Canada Post's Consumer Choice list. That means 45,000 federal mailings get delivered; 39,000 provincial newsletters get delivered. That's a waste of 6,000 newsletters. That's taxpayers' money, and you and I are paying for it.

I strongly believe that elected representatives from all three levels of government should have the same rights when they communicate with their constituents.

I strongly support this motion. I turn the floor over to the next speaking member, the originator of this bill, Mr. Ramsay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The Progressive Conservative caucus has indicated that they won't use up all their time. The honourable member for Timiskaming-Cochrane, Mr. Ramsay, has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. David Ramsay:** I'd like to thank the members from Newmarket-Aurora, Welland, London-Fanshawe, Brant and Ajax-Pickering for their comments today.

Because there have been some interesting comments made and some criticism about this and the whole idea of unaddressed mail, in this case why I got a little upset about it is that people wanted to have this. Their elected official said he wanted to consult with them and they were denied that opportunity. In this particular mailing it was a two-way exercise; it was a two-way piece of communication. They had the ability to respond to something they wanted to voice an opinion on, and they were frustrated by that and wanted to have the opportunity to have done that. I thought the only fair way to distribute these cards was one per household, to basically survey the opinions of my constituents.

I don't use this very often. As I said, maybe four or five times in the last 10 years I've put out a householder. When I think there's something important, and people want to have a say or need to know some very important information, I think it's a good tool to have. We certainly budget for it, and I think it's important for our ratepayers and our voters to be well-informed as to what their elected officials are doing.

Many use it and max it out, and some of us use it very sparingly. But however we choose to do that, that will be up to the voters to say if we're bombarding them with useless information or not. As the member from Welland says, if you're going to be annoying people with it, they might not vote for you. Obviously, that's a choice that we, as elected officials, would have to make.

If we pass this today, all I'm asking for is that support, that I would write Minister Baird and ask him to correct that. I don't think it's a policy he initiated. In fact, I think it was there before his time. Let's hope that he would do the right thing, if we pass it here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

## BILL OF RIGHTS FOR PUPILS WITH DIABETES, 2010

### CHARTRE DES DROITS DES ÉLÈVES DIABÉTIQUES DE 2010

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We're ready to vote. We'll first deal with ballot item number 4, standing in the name of Mr. Levac.

Mr. Levac has moved second reading of Bill 5, An Act to establish a bill of rights for pupils with diabetes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Levac.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I would like the bill to be sent, if it's the pleasure of the House, to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be sent to the standing committee? So ordered.

## CONSUMER REPORTING AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

### LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RENSEIGNEMENTS CONCERNANT LE CONSOMMATEUR

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 5.

Mr. Ruprecht has moved second reading of Bill 7, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Ruprecht.



**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Could I have Bill 7 moved to the general government committee, please?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that it will go to the general government committee? So ordered.

#### MAIL DELIVERY

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with the final ballot item, standing in the name of Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay has moved private member's notice of motion number 15. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Just before we call orders of the day, I just want to remind all members again that this is the pages' last day, and we wish them luck in their lives.

*Applause.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Phillips has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, April 12, at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1620.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Halimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craiton, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby—Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora—Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham—Kent—Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West—Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest—Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges—Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton—Springdale	
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean—Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga—Brampton South / Mississauga—Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity—Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough— Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa—Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa—Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York-Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
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<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough-Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth-Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe-Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



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Tony Ruprecht  
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la politique sociale**

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Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité  
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
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Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial







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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /  
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ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 12 April 2010

Lundi 12 avril 2010



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Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 12 April 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 12 avril 2010

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Islamic prayer.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I'm pleased to introduce Al Strathdee, who is a very proud father from my riding. He is visiting his daughter Andrea today, who is one of our new pages from the great riding of Perth-Wellington.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'm pleased to welcome Keith Pacey, a friend of mine from the city of North Bay and a retired teacher. We're delighted to have him here today for the opening day of the Blue Jays.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to ask my colleagues to welcome Miss Louissa Barnes, a grade 10 student from Lorne Park Secondary School in Mississauga, and her mother, Pauline Barnes. Louissa's essay on her wish to job-shadow a provincial minister was selected as one of two winning submissions from over 200 female students from across the GTA and Niagara peninsula in Youth in Motion's Women in Politics and Government career learning day. Welcome, Louissa.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** It is my privilege to introduce students from St. Marcellinus Secondary School. They are visiting Queen's Park today, and they are a grade 12 politics class. They are in the visitors' gallery. I would like to welcome them to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'd like to welcome the family of page Owen Singer to Queen's Park. Joining us today from my riding of St. Paul's are Owen's mother, Tina; his grandmothers Sandy and Rochelle; and his grandfather Morty. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the Consul General from the Republic of Chile here in Toronto, Mr. Patricio Powell. Please join me in welcoming our guest.

### POLISH COMMUNITY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Before I put my question to the Acting Premier, I wish to take this moment to express the condolences of the Ontario PC caucus to the family of President Kaczynski, the Polish people and the great Polish-Canadian community on this tragic loss.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. I think the honourable member raises a good point. The Polish

people have lost a number of highly esteemed individuals, including their Deputy Speaker as well. I would ask all members, if they would, to please rise and join me as we observe a moment of silence to those individuals who tragically lost their lives.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Our condolences go out to the Polish community here in Toronto, and those in Poland as well.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Thank you, Speaker. I think it's very appropriate for us to share that moment.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** To the Acting Premier: Premier McGuinty promised that he would stop making hospitals pay for bureaucrats seconded to his pet projects. Why did Premier McGuinty break that promise?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This government believes in transparency and accountability at all levels. As a result of suggestions last year, we in fact revealed, at the back of the lists that we published, all of those officials across all ministries and departments who have been seconded and whose pay is captured in different places, to ensure that that accountability and transparency is there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** That's certainly not what the PC caucus heard and not what Ontario families concerned about this ongoing abuse heard. We heard the Premier say, "We're going to change it." We feel it is inappropriate to take money that is supposed to go to front-line care in hospitals to pay bureaucrats who are not even working at those hospitals but seconded to the Premier's pet projects. When we look through this year's sunshine list, we see that the McGuinty Liberals are still paying for special bureaucrats at the pet projects through hospital budgets. This wasn't meant to be tucked away as some kind of endnote to the back of the sunshine list. The Premier said he was going to end it. Why did Dalton McGuinty break yet another promise to Ontario families?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The list is separate, published within the sunshine list; it's there. It's, I believe, in alphabetical order. I don't have it right in front of me. It's there for everyone to see. They can see that.

Do you know what they couldn't see? They couldn't see Hydro One's salaries when the Tories were in office.



They couldn't see OPG when that government was in power. That was deliberately left out of the sunshine list. In fact, we said we would separate out that list; we did. It's published; everyone can see it. It's about accountability and transparency. We even corrected the accountability and transparency overlaps of the previous government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, Dalton McGuinty entered into office by famously breaking his promise not to raise taxes on families and now still, six years later, this Premier says one thing and does the opposite. Minister, I'll remind you, in this very House on October 19, the Premier said, "I disagree with that practice and that's why we're going to change it." Yet still we see money meant for hospitals, for front-line patient care, being diverted to seconded bureaucrats for the Premier's pet projects. Some kind of endnotes buried away at the end of the list are not good enough. You said you would change this practice. I ask the minister, why is Dalton McGuinty still breaking promises to Ontario families?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We've provided for appropriate accountability and transparency. The list of those secondments—and I would remind the member opposite that secondments of this nature have been happening for many, many years across governments of all three political parties—has been provided for. It is on a separate page in the sunshine report. I don't have it in front of me. My recollection is that it's near the back. It's in alphabetical order. It shows individual employees and who's being paid what. It's apparent; it's accountable; it's transparent. That's what we said we would do, that's what we're doing, and that's what this government and this party are all about.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question.  
1040

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Quite frankly, Minister, burying some sheet with some kind of asterisk next to it at the bottom of thousands and thousands of pages is a far cry from ending the practice and is yet another broken promise by this Premier.

## LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Acting Premier: The sunshine list reports that a Gloria Whitson-Shea was paid \$227,000 by the Grand River Hospital, but the Waterloo Record reports that she left there in August 2008. She does not appear in these so-called endnotes the minister speaks about. So, Minister, can you explain to patients in Kitchener-Waterloo why \$227,000 meant for front-line care was diverted from the local hospital to someone that you don't even list on your so-called endnotes?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** If I may, here is the list. I will indicate to the member that it is in alphabetical order, as I said. It's one full page. It lists taxable benefits, salaries paid, the seconded position, the position, the ministry that

the position was seconded to. There it is, right what we said we would do. It's clear; it's accountable; it's transparent. So when the Leader of the Opposition says we didn't do it, I ask the people of Ontario to cast your judgment. There's the list, in alphabetical order, by ministry, by salary and where they're seconded to. That's what we said we would do; that's what we did.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** No, that's not what Dalton McGuinty promised. He said he would end the practice.

I notice that the minister does not tell us what page Gloria Whitson-Shea is listed upon. In fact, she is working for the Waterloo Wellington LHIN. And she is not the only bureaucrat working at the LHINs who is being paid out of hospital budgets. In fact, you're making Bluewater Health pay Antoinette Adey six figures to be the director of community relations for the Bluewater area LHIN, and that's over and above the six figures she is paid by the LHIN.

Minister, are you burying salaries of executives at your high-cost LHINs because you want to skirt salary guidelines, or are you trying to hide the ballooning numbers of your runaway regional bureaucracies?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, the Leader of the Opposition has the numbers, the figures, the names, what organization they're part of. They're not hidden. They're there for the public to see. The fact that he has them is indication of that.

I'll tell you what we are doing. We are shortening wait times for key surgical procedures. We are making our health care system better for all Ontarians. We are building hospitals. We've added hospital beds. We've stopped the practice of the previous government of firing nurses, of laying people off indiscriminately in favour of poor public policy choices.

There's no doubt there are difficult choices in the health care system. Premier McGuinty and his government will ensure that Ontario has the best public health care system in the world.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** First Premier McGuinty says he's going to end the practice, and he does not. Now the finance minister says they're all listed when they're not. Clearly, after six years these guys are still the same gang that says one thing to Ontario families to their face and does something totally different behind closed doors. It's just not only the Waterloo Wellington LHIN, Minister. You're making the Royal Victoria Hospital pay Sandra Easson-Bruno to work for the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN; the Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital pays Paul Audet to work for the Erie St. Clair LHIN; and Hamilton Health Sciences pays Jennifer Everson to work for the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN.

Minister, why are these expensive LHIN bureaucracy salaries buried so deep that you can't even find them on your sunshine list endnotes?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Tory research was able to find them. If Tory research can find them, I think just about anybody can.



This is all about better health care for Ontarians. It's about a better delivery of service, it's about reducing wait times, improving front-line services, and making sure that Ontarians have access to the best health care system in the world. This government is all about accountability and transparency. The member has the numbers. The public has the numbers. The member knows where they've been seconded to and from. That's because we are providing that information. The people of Ontario know that, and the people of Ontario know that this government continues to work hard to improve the level and quality of public services available to all Ontarians.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. When seniors can no longer fully care for themselves and need to move to long-term care, should they be forced to live far from family and friends and slapped with fines if they refuse?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is that we are absolutely committed to providing the best possible care for our seniors. That includes seniors who are at the point in their life when it is time to move into a long-term-care home. We're also committed to providing that care as close to home as possible. I cannot tell you how meaningful it is for us to see those new long-term-care homes open in our communities, to see the homes that were frankly in a state that didn't meet the standards of any caring—people in this community being upgraded to quite wonderful new homes. We're committed to improving care for those in our long-term-care homes, and we will continue to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Seniors who have worked hard all of their lives and now need some help as they grow older are being told in communities across Ontario that they must move to long-term-care homes hundreds and hundreds of kilometres or more from their families. Would this minister accept this for her own family?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I agree with the member opposite that we need to continue the work we're doing when it comes to providing the right supports for seniors. But in fairness, we have increased funding in the long-term-care home sector by over \$1 billion. That's a 55% increase in funding since we were elected in 2003. We've got 6,100 new full-time staff, including 2,300 nurses, who are delivering 12 million more hours of care for our seniors. We are continuing to improve long-term care. We are building new homes. We are opening new homes so that we can provide the very best care for people who need that level of care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Hospitals are telling patients that they must take the first open bed, regardless of whether it's hundreds of kilometres away, or they have to pay a penalty out of their own pocket. Experts at the

Advocacy Centre for the Elderly say what's going on is "often illegal."

Will the McGuinty government enforce its own law, put an end to this practice and commit to making sure that families have access to long-term-care beds close to home?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I said, we are absolutely committed to improving long-term care in this province. Our record speaks for itself. We're spending more than \$1 billion more now than in 2003.

Another way we can help seniors in this province is by reducing the cost of generic drugs. I made an announcement last week that will cut in half the cost of generic drugs for seniors in this province. I have not yet heard from the leader of the third party what her position is. I hope that she would inform us of that position.

1050

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is again to the Acting Premier. Getting people out of overwhelmed hospital and emergency rooms and into home care and long-term-care facilities makes life better for patients and for their families, but not when seniors are shipped away hundreds of kilometres from their homes and their loved ones. When will the McGuinty government put a stop to this heart-wrenching practice?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Again, the member is correct: We still have work to do when it comes to improving long-term care in this province. But the improvements we've made are quite remarkable.

I think the member opposite is talking about the importance of making sure the people who are in our hospitals are people who need the care that only a hospital can provide, and that those who can have their needs met and in fact get better care elsewhere actually have that opportunity to move elsewhere.

We are focusing on our alternate-level-of-care patients. Approximately 17% of the people who are in our hospitals actually could be better served outside the hospital. We're working very hard to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** For people already struggling with tough times, this is another cruel challenge that they're being forced to face. A family in Sudbury is told that an aging parent must move to a long-term-care facility in Parry Sound. That's a four-hour round trip every single time they visit. For too many working people, that's simply impossible to do regularly. Why is this government forcing this hardship on seniors when they need their families the most?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am in complete agreement with the member opposite that having long-term care as close to family as possible is a very high priority for us. That's why we've opened 8,000 new long-term-care beds in this province. We're adding another 2,000 long-term-care beds in this province. This is a challenge



for us, not just for today but for coming years and coming generations. It's very important that we get people the care they need as close to home as possible. We remain committed to doing that.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm pleased that the minister agrees, but the problem seems to only be getting worse in the province. In hospitals across the province, beds are being filled by people who could be and should be recuperating in long-term care or at home. Despite six years of promises, those beds still aren't there and our home care system is broken. Now seniors who have earned the right to some dignity in their later years are being ordered out of their beds and shipped far from family. Would the minister accept this if it was her own family? Why does she think it's fair to subject families to this emotional strain?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I am more than prepared to look into the case she has raised. As I say, I agree with her that care closest to home is the best care, and I will happily look at that particular case. The LHINs are working hard to create the right environment for people in care.

I do want to ask the member opposite, though, about her concern for seniors as it relates to the cost of drugs. This is an important initiative. I am very hopeful that the member opposite will support our initiatives to lower the cost of drugs for seniors and others in this province.

#### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Acting Premier. If one of the LHIN bureaucrats you make hospitals pay for closes the hospital that pays his or her salary, does the LHIN bureaucrat lose their job too? Do they collect severance, or do you just bury the salary in another hospital budget?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The campaign against community-based health decision-making continues. We have given the local community a voice in making health care decisions that are right for their communities.

The local health integration networks are providing extraordinary integration at the local level. They are tying together the care from the perspective of the patient. That is the right thing to do. For too long, we have had a health care system that has been stuck in silos, and the local health integration networks are working with their community members to break down those silos and provide care that is right and best for the people.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Premier McGuinty does an end run around accountability when the hospitals who pay the salaries of LHIN bureaucrats have no say in the work they do or how money is being diverted from front-line care. It's also an end run around accountability when he leads Ontario families to believe that the \$17 million reported in the sunshine list last week accounts for all LHIN bureaucrats earning six-figure salaries. Now he's taking an end run around transparency too, hiding at least

\$1.5 million of secret LHIN bureaucrat salaries in hospital budgets. These bureaucrats are not independent of the hospitals who pay them.

The Premier has created a conflict of interest here. Deputy Premier, why didn't you disclose the details of LHIN bureaucrats who are being paid out of hospital budgets?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** These salaries that we have hidden are in the report; they are publicly available. That's how the member opposite has them. This is just another attack on community decision-making when it comes to health care in this province.

I implore the member opposite to actually learn what the LHIN is doing in her community. Take the time and understand that integration that is happening. I think that the Central East LHIN has done a very, very good job in driving that integration in their communities. They've worked with nine hospitals so that each one of them has a balanced budget plan. They're allocating the aging-at-home dollars; we're spending over a billion dollars on aging at home. That is all being directed through the LHINs, using the community organizations that are there so people can stay in their homes longer.

The LHINs are the future of health care, and I think the member opposite should take the time to learn what's happening in her community.

#### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** To the Acting Premier: The Rahim Jaffer case just won't go away. With a sordid trail of hookers, bikers and sleazy business deals, it has even cost a federal cabinet minister her job. Jaffer was caught driving drunk with cocaine in his vehicle, yet got off with barely a slap on the wrist. Who was involved in cutting this sweetheart plea deal?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member opposite knows that this is a matter that was before the courts and before the police and was resolved through the due process of our legal system. Accordingly, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to speak beyond that, but again, I would say to the member opposite that these issues are a matter of due process within the legal system. The member opposite knows and understands that, I think.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** That's the problem. The matter isn't before the courts anymore. The optics here reek. The OPP officers involved were experienced and very diligent. According to the Toronto Star, the police were surprised at Jaffer's sweetheart deal, a deal that demonstrates that there's one set of rules for some people and another for everyone else. Why would the Attorney General's office cut this deal—holding a drunk driving charge and a possession of cocaine charge—when this government purports to be tough on drunk drivers and, I presume, stoned drivers as well?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member opposite knows that crown attorneys are independent and make their decisions. The crown—

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just ask the member from Durham to keep his comments to himself. If he has an issue with another member in this House, have that discussion with an honourable member outside.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No. Please continue.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No, I'm not accepting—stop the clock. No, leave the clock running; pardon me. I would just ask the honourable member that if he has an issue with another member in this chamber, to have those discussions outside. I don't need to hear it going back and forth. It's not helpful to any of us in this House.

Deputy.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The honourable member knows—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not helpful either, Minister of Finance.

Please continue.

1100

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member knows that crown attorneys are independent and make their decisions. The crown stated on the record that these were issues related to the evidence. We have to abide by that and respect the independence of the crown attorneys' office so that, in fact, justice and due process can proceed as intended.

## PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. My constituents want assured access to both low-cost prescription drugs and to a pharmacist. Both are important to them. There are plans in the works to reform the drug system, and part of the plan is to remove professional allowances. Those are the rebates that are paid to pharmacies by generic drug companies to stock their products on their shelves.

Pharmacy stores like Shoppers Drug Mart oppose the changes. They say, "Look, it will hurt our bottom line and affect services we provide." But on the other hand, groups like the Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Association of Retired Persons praised the changes. They say they will improve access to drugs.

Minister, what's the real story on drug reform? Who do we believe? What are the facts?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Compared to other jurisdictions, other OECD countries, Ontarians are paying far too much for generic drugs. The biggest reason is these so-called professional allowance payments from generic companies to the companies that own the pharmacies in exchange for stocking their products; 70% of these payments, which are supposed to be used for patient care, are

actually being spent on salaries, bonuses, fringe benefits, and, yes, to boost their profits.

Our proposed reforms would make our system more transparent by removing these allowances. Instead, we'll be paying pharmacies for the vital services they provide as well as supporting pharmacies in rural and under-served areas. This will allow us to cut the price by at least half that Ontarians are paying for these—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My constituents in Willowdale get really ticked off when they read that in Ontario, we pay as much as four times more for most of the popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health problems as they do in the United States. To hear that the cause of these inflated prices is the abuse of the rebate system really makes people's blood boil.

Minister, in fact, how are the allowances being abused and what proof do you have that the allowances are being abused?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I believe that we do have a responsibility to take action on this issue. We cannot stand by as the prices that government pays, that individuals pay and that health plans pay are inflated because of allowances that are being abused.

Of the 206 on-site inspections conducted at pharmacies in 2008-09, there were violations in 100% of inspections. In all cases, pharmacies were required to repay the money to the government and to taxpayers. In some cases, legal action was pursued.

In April 2009, we uncovered a drug-recycling scheme. We laid 22 provincial offence charges for providing false or incomplete information or obstructing an inspection. We issued 12 rebate penalty orders and filed five complaints with the Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is for the Acting Premier. We're 80 days away now from your government's greedy HST tax grab kicking in. Already, a senior McGuinty Liberal is softening the ground for you to increase the HST from 13% to 15%. Dalton McGuinty's former strategic adviser Andrew Steele praises the NDP in Nova Scotia for hiking the HST by 2%, calling it "fiscally prudent."

We always knew you were addicted to increasing taxes, but when were you going to tell Ontario families of your secret plan to hike the HST?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I am pleased that on January 1, personal taxes in Ontario were cut. I am pleased that on July 1 of this year, the capital tax will be eliminated. I am pleased that on July 1 of this year, the tax on manufacturers and processors will be cut from 12% to 10%. I am pleased that the general corporate tax rate will be cut from some 14% to 10% by 2013. I am pleased that the Conservatives' leading expert at last year's budget hear-



ings said that our policy will create 600,000 jobs in the next 10 years.

I can't account for why the NDP would raise the HST—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm just counting all those jobs, Minister.

Even if the minister says he won't hike the HST, you've got to read the fine print, because the one-time director of strategic research and policy for that party is already out there floating the idea of an HST rate hike. The McGuinty Liberals' adviser calls Nova Scotia's NDP Premier "smart" for running a deficit, raising taxes and cutting government.

You're going to increase the HST to 15%, aren't you, Acting Premier? Are you raising the HST (a) to be able to pay secret salaries of LHIN bureaucrats, (b) so you don't have to get control over runaway spending on eHealth and LHIN consultants, (c) so you can keep subsidizing foreign countries, or all of the above?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Why won't the Tories commit to undoing the HST? I think that's the mystery question that all Ontarians ask. What is your position? Are you going to leave it in place? I think they are, Mr. Speaker, because they haven't said anything to the contrary.

Look, I can't account for why the NDP would raise the HST in Nova Scotia. I don't understand—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The members were doing extremely well through the first half of question period, but the noise level has accelerated, and I would just like it decreased. Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Tories won't say what they will do. Their federal brethren are voting for it; they gave us \$4 billion to do it. Their expert says it's the right tax policy. They said it was the right tax policy before we did it. We've laid out a plan. We've seen 100,000 net new jobs since last May and 1.6% growth in GDP in the fourth quarter. Things are getting—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. In its recent budget, the McGuinty government took the drastic measure of reducing funding for new transit lines in Toronto by \$4 billion—almost half the money promised over the next five years.

One would hope that the McGuinty government did a careful assessment of the impacts of this decision. Would the minister please share with Ontarians the impact of the cut to transit in terms of lost jobs, increased pollution and lost economic productivity?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, I need to correct the member opposite. This is not a cut of the fund-

ing. What we have said is we are going to delay the cash flow for the first five years. The commitment—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The party opposite can deride the answer, but the answer is the answer. The \$11.5 billion is in place. You've heard that from the finance minister, you've heard it from the Premier and you've heard it from me. What we have had to do, because of the economic downturn and because of the fact that we do have a deficit in this province, is slow down the cash flow. But I'm working with Metrolinx, and Metrolinx is going to be bringing forward a plan to keep all of those projects on track. They will be completed—a little bit slower, but they will be completed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The McGuinty transit cuts will undermine hundreds of good jobs in Thunder Bay building streetcars. The McGuinty transit cuts will worsen Toronto gridlock, which already costs \$5 billion a year. The McGuinty transit cuts will worsen smog, which costs Ontario \$1 billion a year in health care costs. The McGuinty transit cuts will worsen poverty, which costs Ontario \$30 billion a year. The McGuinty transit cuts will hasten climate change, which is already costing Ontarians billions of dollars in drought, storms and heat waves.

I ask again, why won't the McGuinty government admit that the real costs of cutting transit funding for Ontarians far outweigh any short-term savings?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have to say that it is a bit rich coming from this member, questioning the transit build. This member is the single member in this House who has opposed the building of the air-rail link, has opposed the work that's been going on in the west end of Toronto, and has been stirring up opposition to building good transit in this city for months.

1110

The reality is, we are going to build transit in Toronto; we are going to keep those five projects on track. Metrolinx will be bringing forward a plan to make sure that those projects continue. It would be wonderful if the member opposite would work with us in her community to make sure that the transit gets built.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Last week, green businesses throughout our province got some good news. It is clear now that Ontario is serious about becoming a leader in clean and renewable energy. Last week, the minister, at Durham College in Oshawa, announced the awarding of 184 contracts to large-scale renewable energy projects. There is no doubt these contracts will change the landscape of Ontario's green economy.

Our feed-in-tariff program is already attracting international attention and praise. The \$7 billion of investment by Samsung in Ontario is a prime example of this. But too much international interest could mean that On-



tario's own green businesses get left behind on home turf. Would the minister please elaborate on how these feed-in-tariff contracts are making Ontario a destination for green energy development while still looking out for the interests of our own—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I thank the member for the question. The announcement last week made at Durham College signalled a great day for green energy in this province. These 184 projects will generate 2,500 megawatts of renewable energy. That's enough to power 600,000 homes in Ontario. These projects will include 76 ground-mounted solar panels, 47 onshore wind projects, 46 water power projects and seven biogas projects, among others.

Combined with the 510 medium-scale feed-in-tariff contracts, Ontario will see 20,000 jobs created, which will generate \$9 billion in investments in this province, something that the people of Ontario are looking forward to. I can tell you that those students at Durham College who will receive these new-generation jobs are very excited about this announcement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** It is clear that these FIT contracts are truly a landmark initiative for the province. I can say without any hesitation that the people who live in my community of Ottawa Centre are passionate and eager to see Ontario leading in green energy. Better still, beyond the desire for cleaner sources of power, my constituents see the value to our economy in green energy investments.

I understand that 694 medium- and large-scale contracts were awarded province-wide. I'm sure there are many members in this House whose constituents will likewise benefit. They are counting on this government to make sure the Green Energy Act lives up to its full potential. Will the minister ensure that Ontarians are not disappointed?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I can tell you, we're absolutely determined to ensure that our Green Energy Act lives up to its full potential. Ontarians definitely will not be disappointed, nor will the people in the member's own community in Ottawa, who I believe received six of these very important contracts. His community is going to fare very well as a result.

Last week's announcement was really an indication that our government is showing that we are very serious about green energy here in this province. The impacts of the FIT contracts stretch well beyond the economic benefits and reach all corners of this province. Through the Green Energy Act, the FIT program will help us in our goal to eliminate coal-fired generation from our energy mix by the year 2014. By eliminating dirty energy from coal, we're working to ensure that we're protecting the health of all Ontarians. This will be something that future generations will be grateful that we took the tough decisions today to ensure—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Minister of Health. The McGuinty government continues to waste money intended for front-line health care through slush funds, the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle and unelected, unaccountable LHINs. Now, rural pharmacies will have to close because they choose consultants over trusted, front-line health care providers.

Why are you cutting front-line services in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke in favour of your Liberal-friendly health care consultants?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me begin by offering the member opposite a briefing on exactly what is included in our plan to bring down the cost of drugs in this province. We are concerned about the access that people in rural Ontario have to pharmacies. That is why we are actually increasing the dispensing fee in rural Ontario. This is the right thing to do. This is the right thing to do for patients in Ontario and for Ontarians who are paying too much for generic drugs. It's the right thing to do for taxpayers.

We are committed to enhancing the role of pharmacists by paying them directly for the vital services they provide. We will pay pharmacists directly for things like managing multiple medications, for helping people manage chronic diseases. In rural Ontario, we will be paying a higher dispensing fee.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We've seen emergency rooms shut down in Fort Erie and Port Colborne. You are closing acute care beds at the Brockville hospital and nurses are being laid off in Ottawa. Money for front-line health care is being wasted on consultants, and more and more rural communities will have to deal with the fallout. I know the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock won't ask this question on behalf of his constituents, so I will: Where will the residents of Lindsay, Haliburton and Minden go for front-line health care when their pharmacists are forced to close shop because of your drug reforms?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me reiterate my offer to educate the member opposite on what our reforms entail. What the member opposite is essentially saying is that it's okay that we are spending money that is going to services that do not improve health care in this province. Rather, he is on the side of pharmacy on this. We are on the side of cancer patients; we are on the side of CARP; we are on the side of the Heart and Stroke Foundation. I'm surprised that the member opposite is taking the position that he is taking.

This is an important reform. It's important for all of us in Ontario. It is particularly important for those who need those drugs to get the health care they deserve. I again implore the member opposite to educate himself on what we are reforming here.



## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Last week I was in Niagara Falls, where I hosted a local town hall meeting about health care. People were angry and frustrated, and shared gut-wrenching stories about the impact of ER closures in Port Colborne and Fort Erie. Nancy Beam from Stevensville said, "We've got to get our nurses back. We've got to get our doctors back. They do the best they can, but they need help and the government has to step up." Will the McGuinty government step up and reopen these emergency rooms?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think that the investments that we have made in health care indicate our commitment to improving health care in this province. We have made substantial new investments in health care and we are seeing the results. We have over 900,000 more Ontarians attached to primary health care than when we were elected. Many of those are in the Hamilton-Niagara area. We have been able to bring down wait times for key procedures dramatically. We post those wait times and people can see for themselves.

We have invested in home care. We have invested in long-term care. We're committed to improving health care in this province, and that includes all parts of the province, including the Hamilton area.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I have a story about wait times to tell this minister, because shutting down the local emergency rooms has swamped neighbouring ERs. Melanie Cooper took her badly injured teenage son to St. Catharines and waited four and a half hours in the ER for treatment before she finally gave up, put her son in the car and drove him to an entirely different community down the QEW, where he was seen promptly, after waiting four and a half hours—there's a wait time for you, Minister—with a head injury. Will the minister stop hiding behind her LHINs, take responsibility and reopen Niagara region's local emergency rooms?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am concerned when I hear stories about people who are not getting the health care they deserve in this province. That's why we're making the investments that we are making and that's why we are focusing a lot of attention on bringing down wait times in our emergency departments. It's important that people get the care they need as quickly as possible. We are working with our hospitals and, yes, with our LHINs to bring down those wait times.

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The Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN has really done exceptional work when it comes to wait times on a number of procedures. I know they are working on bringing down those emergency department wait times.

There is still work to do, and we are committed to doing the work and making the tough decisions that need to be made in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M. Phil McNeely:** Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Mes commettants francophones m'ont fait part de leurs préoccupations en ce qui concerne le budget que le gouvernement a annoncé le 25 mars dernier.

Ils comprennent que le gouvernement a besoin de se serrer la ceinture, mais ils s'inquiètent que les services en français en souffrent. Notamment, le commissaire aux services en français, François Boileau, demandait dans son dernier rapport que son budget soit augmenté afin qu'il soit en mesure de remplir sa mission correctement.

Madame la Ministre, que répondez-vous au commissaire et à mes commettants?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je remercie le député d'Ottawa-Orléans pour sa question pertinente. Oui, nous traversons une période économique difficile qui exige que le gouvernement fasse des choix. Cependant, je peux assurer le membre d'Ottawa-Orléans et ses commettants que les contraintes budgétaires évoquées dans l'annonce du budget ne touchent pas directement les services en français.

Le budget de 2010 s'engage à maintenir le budget du commissaire au niveau où il était, tout comme le budget de l'Office des affaires francophones. Bien sûr, s'il y avait plus d'argent, nous aurions été très heureux d'ajouter au budget du commissaire, mais vu le contexte économique, nous ne pouvions pas.

D'ailleurs, permettez-moi d'ajouter que c'est notre gouvernement qui a créé le poste de commissaire aux services en français; donc, si ce n'était pas une priorité, le poste n'existerait pas. Le fait de maintenir les budgets alloués aux affaires francophones au même niveau montre que notre gouvernement s'est engagé vis-à-vis des francophones, et il va continuer à s'engager pour améliorer les services en français.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M. Phil McNeely:** Je vous remercie pour votre engagement à l'égard des francophones. Comme tous les autres membres de cette Assemblée, j'ai lu le budget avec beaucoup d'attention, mais je n'ai pas vu de mesures spécialement dédiées aux francophones. Pouvez-vous me dire ce que vous faites pour les francophones cette année?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Merci pour cette question. J'aimerais faire remarquer que le gouvernement est le gouvernement pour tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes. Alors, notre gouvernement est inclusif. Ce n'est pas parce que je suis la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones que mes autres collègues ne s'occupent pas des affaires francophones dans leur ministère respectif. Il n'y a pas de budget spécifique pour les francophones. Les francophones, comme tout le reste de la population, vont profiter des mesures contenues dans le budget, comme les réductions d'impôts et les dépenses en infrastructure et en éducation. Mais surtout, les mesures annoncées dans le cadre du plan Ontario ouvert sur le monde, particulièrement ciblées vers les résidents du



nord de la province et vers les étudiants, vont profiter aussi aux francophones.

Pour conclure, j'aimerais ajouter que la récente présentation de la loi sur la journée franco-ontarienne devant l'Assemblée démontre la volonté de notre—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the minister responsible for infrastructure. After awarding a multi-million-dollar contract for the development, construction and management of 400-series highway service centres under a very questionable bidding process, the ministries of transportation and infrastructure agreed to an undisclosed settlement to Carillion Canada Inc. The settlement agreement contains a gag order that forbids the reasons for the settlement and the amount to be made public.

Can the minister tell us, is he aware of this secret agreement, and how can the government justify making this secret deal and sealing it with a gag order?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** No, I'm not aware of what the member is referring to, but what I can tell you is that we're very, very proud of the investment we are making in Ontario's roads. They're important investments. They're all part of our \$32.5-billion investment that we're making. We're now halfway through that two-year period of time—a record amount of investment, more invested in infrastructure than ever before. It's something that we're very proud of and something that's creating thousands of jobs across this province at a time when we really need it.

When we look at the jobs being created here, these aren't just our figures that are rolling out. The Conference Board of Canada has indeed brought forward figures of their own which indicate that our figures very much jibe with theirs. In fact, ours may be a little bit conservative. But I'd be happy to look into the issue the member is raising—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** We have it on good authority that the reason for this secret payment is that the government was once again caught red-handed mishandling the bidding process. What started out as a public tender ended up as essentially an exclusive invitation to only two companies to bid. When the contract was awarded, there was no firm pricing and a lengthy list of conditions yet to be negotiated, with the result that the final contract could be inflated by millions of dollars—essentially an open-ended contract coupled with this undisclosed secret payment to the losing bidder.

Will the minister agree to table the settlement agreement with Carillion Canada Inc. with full disclosure of the reasons the government agreed to this secret payment?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm going to refer this to the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the member opposite, who was a Minister of Transportation himself, understands that the 23 service centres along Highway 401 needed to be upgraded, and that's what we're talking about. Host Kilmer Service Centres Inc. is confirmed as the new service provided for Ontario's service centres. The government selected Host Kilmer Service through an open, transparent and competitive procurement process. There was an independent fairness adviser who closely scrutinized everything we did, and they agreed that this contract was awarded following a fair and transparent procurement process.

What's important is that we need these service centres upgraded. They are in the process of being upgraded. They will have tourist information—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### TVONTARIO

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, given the ongoing decline of TVO in-house production, given that we have capable film and television people working at TVO who can produce good, revenue-generating content, what assurances will you give that Ontarians will see more actual television that reflects their lives and more of their stories produced by TVO itself?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Speaker, I'm sorry, but I think that I'm going to have to ask for some clarification with the supplementary.

Our government remains committed to providing resources to public education television through TVO and TFO in both of our official languages. That has been our commitment. There's no question that there have always been challenges, but because we respect and recognize the education component of TVO, we continue to work with those who play a very important and key role in ensuring the quality programs that it delivers for the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** In Ontario, we can produce good, quality television that can be sold to generate revenue and put people to work. Can you tell us, Minister, how many hours of increased television production Ontarians can look forward to as a result of their support of TVO?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Again, our government is committed to providing quality public education television to the people of Ontario. I've just recently had information from my colleague, the Minister of Finance, who would say that because of the tax credits that we have provided in the film industry, that has generated a good deal more of quality product for public education television.

We have recognized that TVO is a very important vehicle. We will continue to work with our partners in that industry.

*Interjection.*



**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** My colleagues here are identifying many excellent programs that are enjoyed by the people of Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### TOURISM

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. As you know, small businesses are the lifeline of Ontario's economy. They support, stimulate and strengthen our province. The tourism industry is very important in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, including along the beaches of Lambton Shores and in small communities like Dresden, which is the home of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

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Thousands of small businesses from one end of the province to the other rely solely on the revenue that the tourism industry brings into Ontario. The number of visitors we attract to Ontario has a direct impact on the success of these businesses. These businesses need to lower their costs and boost their savings.

The world and the industry have changed since the recession, and so should our approach. To the Minister: How are we helping Ontario's tourism-based industries work through these tough economic times?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for the question. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about tourism in Ontario. The global economy has indeed changed. At times it is quite challenging, but we are committed to remaining competitive. Since 2003, we have invested almost \$700 million in our tourism agencies. Tourism businesses across the province will also benefit from the single-sales-tax reform. This is the single most important step we can take. It will mean tax cuts and tax credits for tourism businesses. Over the next 10 years the tax reform will result in \$47 billion in new investment as well, creating 600,000 jobs.

We are on track to strengthen tourism—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Tax cuts do provide significant benefits, but we must go further to strengthen the tourism industry and the businesses that rely on it.

The global market continues to grow. It's even more competitive and at times rather volatile. As such, we need to re-evaluate the way we market and brand Ontario to local, national and international visitors. In a vast province like Ontario, we really need greater efficiencies and coordination in the way we reach out and showcase this province's beauty and natural resources.

What steps will the minister take to ensure that this government is on the right track to creating a stronger and more competitive industry for years to come?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you again for the question. We are committed to attracting more jobs and investment to Ontario. This is why we are moving for-

ward with the implementation of 13 new tourism regions. These new regions will help improve and coordinate tourism, attract more visitors and generate more economic impact. We are also investing \$65 million annually over the next two years to support this implementation.

We are going further: Our government has introduced the Open Ontario plan, a plan that will support Ontario to better compete on the international stage.

There will always be more to do, but our government is on the right track. Our tourism industry will be stronger and more viable well into the future.

### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the minister responsible for infrastructure: The minister did not answer my question as to whether he would look into this matter and table the settlement—the secret agreement, the secret settlement—with Carillion Canada and to provide the House with a full disclosure of the reason for that secret deal.

I want to make it very clear that we are not questioning the need for the redevelopment and construction of these service centres. Neither are we calling into question the integrity of Host Kilmer, the company that was awarded the contract. We are calling into question the process that the government followed in awarding this contract. So I ask once again the minister responsible: Will he agree to table that secret deal and let us know how much money was paid and why a gag order was placed on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'll refer this to the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I understand that the member opposite is asking serious questions about a serious issue, and I'm happy to have that conversation with him if he would like to get whatever details that are available. But the point is, we did follow the rules. There was an independent financial adviser who looked at everything that we did, said that the whole process was above board and was absolutely acceptable.

I come back to the reality that what we need to do is revitalize those service centres along the highway. They are necessary for the people who travel that highway every day.

As I said, I'm willing to talk with the member opposite if there are other details he's looking for.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I am not looking for a conversation with the Minister of Transportation on this issue. I made it very clear that, on behalf of all members of Legislature, we believe we are entitled to know what that secret agreement was, how much was paid to Carillion Canada and why it was paid, because we do know that they challenged the government over the bidding process. So once again, back to the Minister of Transportation: Will she agree to table that secret deal with Carillion and let the public know how much was involved and why they



engaged in a gag order around this agreement to begin with?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I have said to the member opposite is that I am willing to have a conversation with him to provide him with whatever details are available. Obviously, if there are details that a particular company has that I don't have, then I can't give him that information, but I am absolutely willing to have that conversation with him.

But I have to say that Host Kilmer was confirmed as the new service provider. An independent financial adviser looked at the process and said that it was open, that it was transparent and that everything that needed to be in place was in place. I'm happy to have the follow-up conversation with the member opposite, but I am absolutely confident that the process that was put in place was one that will withstand any scrutiny that the member opposite might want to bring to it.

### GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** A question to the Deputy Premier: As you know, your climate plan won't even meet its current targets. The cuts to Transit City will further weaken your efforts. How do you plan to make up the loss of Transit City cuts to greenhouse gas emissions? How will you make good on your plan with this reduction in investment?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I reiterate what the Minister of Transportation said earlier in question period: There are no cuts. That's patently wrong.

But let's talk about green action plans and let's talk about carbon reduction and about the first government in North America that's closing its coal plants. That is more than any other jurisdiction anywhere in North America. While other governments are wrestling with how to price carbon, this government is wrestling with how to close coal. It has not been easy. It does involve renewable energy, and I congratulate my colleague for his outstanding announcement last week. It involves substantial investments in public transit, which we have made—billions of dollars—and I'll remind that member and his party that they were against buying streetcars in Thunder Bay to extend the subway system.

This government has done more on the climate change file to lower greenhouse gas emissions than any other in North America. We need no lecture—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The time for question period has ended.

### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker: I believe I misspoke in my answer to the member opposite. At one point, I said that an independent fairness adviser—that's what I intended to say. I think I said "independent financial adviser." It was an independent fairness adviser.

### MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege for which I gave notice to you and to House leaders on Thursday, April 1. The question of privilege relates to interference with the freedom of members of this assembly to move within the legislative precinct. I raise this matter at the earliest opportunity. Because the breach of privilege was committed against me and several members of the loyal opposition, it took time to investigate the facts and confirm the details that I will be referring to you in this submission.

In brief, I, along with the leader of the official opposition and the members for Oxford, Sarnia-Lambton, Haldimand-Norfolk, Halton, Simcoe North, Whitby-Oshawa, Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, Dufferin-Caledon, Nepean-Carleton, York Simcoe, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Durham, Leeds-Grenville, Thornhill, Simcoe-Grey and Kitchener-Waterloo, was obstructed by the government or its security staff after our briefing on budget day.

You may recall, and Hansard records from March 25 will show, that several members of the opposition were not in the House when the finance minister tabled the budget. We might not have been in the House for the minister's budget address were it not for the timely intervention of the opposition House leader and the member for Wellington-Halton Hills.

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It was not by choice that we were not present in the House for the beginning of the government's announcement that its planning had produced a record \$21-billion deficit or the minister's explanation of what that will mean for our constituents. We were prevented from being in the House for the beginning of this important debate. Government security staff detained us at the briefing room, even though the budget briefing was over and the finance minister was tabling the budget.

The privilege of members to move freely within the legislative precinct is well established. The privilege is protected so that a member may act on his or her constituents' behalf, as the member sees fit. In our democracy, our constituents hold us accountable for the decisions we make on how to participate in debates.

In this regard, the government's interference with my ability to be in the legislative chamber at the time the budget was tabled also interfered with the fundamental relationship that exists between me and my constituents. While breaches of this privilege are rare, they are not without precedent. Speaker, I will refer relevant parliamentary authorities and precedents to you in a moment. These precedents show that Speakers found that a prima facie breach of privilege was established in similar circumstances. But before I do, I should add that the obstruction of me and my colleagues comes despite the finance minister having turned his mind to what ought to have happened at the end of the budget briefing.

On March 19, Tim Shortill, chief of staff to Minister Duncan, sent an email correspondence that set out a



rollout plan for the budget briefing. The briefing, as is customary, was subject to lock-up. This means that members and staff who attend the briefing agree to remain in the briefing room and not to communicate the information provided to them until they are released.

What is significant in the correspondence of the Minister of Finance's office is that it communicated a plan for how we would be released and able to be in the legislative chamber in time for the budget being tabled. Mr. Shortill advised, "Shortly before 4 p.m., MPPs will proceed to the Legislature (escorted by a member of the minister's office and OPP officers) to be present when the minister tables the budget."

However, like so many other things with this government, there was a significant divide between the plan and its execution. What happened at the end of the briefing departed considerably from the plan Mr. Shortill shared with us. After the briefing had concluded, members remained at the briefing room and awaited our escort to the legislative chamber, but as 4 p.m. neared, we were not permitted to leave the room.

We asked security to escort us or release us so we could make our own way to the legislative chamber in time for the budget address. We were not released or escorted; rather, security stated that they were awaiting the finance minister's orders before we would be permitted to leave the briefing room.

Again, this was not in keeping with what Mr. Shortill said the plan was to be. This deviation from the plan is also not what I or my colleagues consented to or could be taken to have consented to by attending the briefing.

We were detained. The breach of privilege begins with the detention. The breach is aggravated by the fact that we were not permitted to be in the legislative chamber in time for the Minister of Finance to table the budget.

In House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Marleau and Montpetit state, "The House has the authority to invoke privilege where its ability has been obstructed in the execution of its functions or where members have been obstructed in the performance of their duties."

O'Brien and Bosc go on to explain both the privilege and the role of the Speaker in more detail. In chapter 3, which deals with privileges and immunities of members, O'Brien and Bosc state, "In circumstances where members claim to be physically obstructed, impeded, interfered with or intimidated in the performance of their parliamentary functions, the Speaker is apt to find a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred."

What constitutes a breach of this privilege has been considered in rulings by several Speakers of the Canadian House of Commons. In 1989, Speaker Fraser, for one, was asked to rule on what transpired after a member was stopped by security at a roadblock and prevented from accessing Centre Block by car. On October 30, 1989, Speaker Fraser ruled that a prima facie case for obstruction existed and referred the matter to a standing committee. You may find it pertinent for your deliberations to note that in making his ruling, Speaker Fraser considered the fact that the member was free to

walk to Centre Block, but he still ruled that a prima facie case of obstruction existed.

In 1999, Speaker Parent considered a point of privilege raised by members of Parliament who had difficulty accessing their offices. The members objected to the lack of access, saying it prevented them from performing their functions and meeting their obligations in a timely fashion. This was for routine work, not something as eventful as a budget presentation. But Speaker Parent ruled that a prima facie breach of privilege existed, and he referred the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Following the authorities and precedents, I respectfully submit there's no conclusion but that a prima facie breach of privilege exists for the interference my colleagues and I experienced on Thursday, March 25. We were physically obstructed, impeded and interfered with when we tried to make our way to the chamber for the presentation of the budget to the assembly. We were held back from the legislative chamber even though, according to the government's own plan, the lock-up period was over.

This is a serious matter. In a civil context, a court would have little difficulty finding that we were held against our will. But in this parliamentary setting, the detention is even more serious, because it interfered with the interests our constituents have in our full participation and attention on the budget.

Our mere absence from the legislative chamber at the beginning of the budget presentation is proof that the interference occurred.

The precedents I have cited show that this is enough to establish a prima facie case that our privilege was breached. Add to it my submission that we followed the plan sent to us by the Minister of Finance's staff, but the government did not.

In my submission, it is also compelling to consider that the opposition members did everything reasonably within their capacity to be in the chamber, but it was the failure of the government to ensure we were escorted.

Following the parliamentary authorities and precedents I've cited, a prima facie case of obstruction exists, and this matter should be referred to a committee to examine the deviation from the rollout plan, why it happened and how it can be avoided in the future.

Upon your ruling that a prima facie breach of privilege exists, I am prepared to move a motion calling for this matter to be referred to an appropriate committee of the Legislature to examine the breach and report back to the Legislature with recommendations.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Speaker, on behalf of New Democrats, I rise in support of this point of privilege and wish to speak briefly to it. First of all, it's a very, very serious matter. It's far from a trivial matter.

It's important, perhaps, that we remind ourselves again, by reference to Beauchesne, where Beauchesne quotes Erskine May—because here we have a breach that could be perceived as a breach of an individual member's privilege; or it could be a breach of the corporate pri-



vilege, a privilege of the House as a whole. In my submission, it's the right of the House to have full attendance of its members, unless those members are not present in the House for any number of valid reasons. Take a look at what Beauchesne cites of May—I'm referring to Beauchesne, 6th edition, page 11: "Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the high court of Parliament, and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals."

It was interesting, I happened upon a reprint of John Hatsell's four-volume *Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons*, first published in 1818. I'm referring to the reprint published in 2010 by General Books. The first volume opens to page 4, and Hatsell prioritizes privilege as number one in the list of parliamentary issues that he discusses. This dates back to the period prior to Henry VIII in the British Parliament. I'll just read briefly from Hatsell's commentary on this. "As it is an essential part of the constitution of every court of judicature, and absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers, that persons resorting to such courts, whether as judges or as parties, should be entitled to certain privileges to secure them from molestation during their attendance; it is more peculiarly essential to the court of Parliament, the first and highest court in this kingdom, that the members, who compose it, should not be prevented ... from their attendance on this important duty, but should, for a certain time, be excused from obeying any other call...."

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Now, historically, as I understand it, and I'm sure others agree, this protection from molestation or interference with one's right to attend and obligation to attend at the High Court of Parliament was interfered with as a result of things like civil arrests for debt, amongst other things, and that's specifically what is considered in historical considerations of these individual/collective privileges.

Just very briefly, another interesting decision—this one predates Confederation here in Canada. It's from the Upper Canada Court of Queen's Bench in the case of *Wadsworth*. There was a case where a member of the Legislature—before Confederation; no Parliament—was arrested, and the court found that his civil arrest was a breach of his privilege. The court states at paragraphs 10 to 11 of the decision, "Now, if it is essential to the public interests that the several members should be at liberty, when called upon to attend to their legislative duties, and that these duties must be regarded as paramount to private or individual interests, as they are undoubtedly considered in England, it follows, as it appears to me, that a member cannot be restrained at the instance of any individual from attendance upon these duties."

What is shocking and egregious in the case put to you by the member for the Conservative Party is that, as we see it and as we know it now, the police were operating at

the direction of the Minister of Finance. We're told that they, the police, were awaiting the finance minister's orders before members could leave the briefing room.

My final submission—and this is a decision by Speaker Milliken, which I submit to you is very, very much on point and very, very valuable to you, sir, in determining the outcome of this point made by Mr. Miller. I'm referring, of course, to the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, O'Brien and Bosc, page 111:

"In 2004, a question of privilege was raised regarding the free movement of members within the parliamentary precinct during a visit by the President of the United States, George W. Bush." We don't have a scenario here where, as in some of the other cases cited from the federal Parliament, we have a demonstration or we have a picket line; this is a visit by an American President. Back to the text: "A number of members complained that, in attempting to prevent protesters from gaining entrance to Parliament Hill, police had also denied certain members access to the parliamentary precinct and thus prevented them from carrying out their parliamentary functions. Speaker Milliken found a *prima facie* case of privilege and the matter was referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs."

What's most interesting about this is what the committee did. If you take a look at the footnote on page 111, it tells us, "The committee concluded that members' privileges had been breached and recommended that the Sergeant-at-Arms and the RCMP provide written reports to the House outlining how such a situation would be avoided in the future."

That seems to me not only to confirm the validity of this point of privilege, but also to confirm the scenario wherein Speaker Fraser—wherein the obstruction was technical but not particularly effective, and that is the case where cars were blocked from going onto Parliament Hill, but people could have walked. Speaker Fraser found that the mere blocking of cars, even though people could have circumvented the blockade by walking in, in and of itself was a *prima facie* breach.

Here we have police officers and security staff holding members of the Legislature who are protesting their detention, who are pointing out that the time is coming that it's 4 o'clock, who are declaring that they have been assured that they will be allowed back into the chamber, escorted, in time for 4 o'clock, and the response, as we hear it at this point, from security personnel and presumably the OPP, is, "Oh, no. Nobody's going anywhere until the Minister of Finance says so."

I don't want to be critical of the police officers in this instance, because I think that we have a case here where police officers are following directions. I think that we also have a case, the decision of Speaker Milliken, which not only confirms the breach that's occurred here, but also provides, in my respectful submission, the appropriate remedy should this matter go to debate after the Speaker finds a *prima facie* breach.

Thank you kindly, Speaker. Also, as you can well imagine, I'm grateful to the learned persons who referred



me in the first instance to Hatsell as a source of parliamentary precedent. I'll be referring to it again, I'm sure.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Thank you to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and, of course, it's always lovely to have another opportunity to hear the member from Welland refer to his precedents and all the things that he loves to do.

I would argue that there is no breach of privilege in this particular circumstance. I would also note that under section 21(b), a question of privilege is to be taken up immediately. While the member has provided us with written submissions dated April 1, this alleged breach of privilege occurred Thursday, March 25. The House did sit for a full week afterwards, and it could have been raised at that time. I did not receive the submissions in my office until April 8. So I am just pointing out for the record that it was not done in an incredibly timely way, though section 21(b) does require that it be taken up immediately.

I would also argue that the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka misspoke in his submissions by saying they were obstructed by the government. They were, in fact, obstructed by security at the time. Procedures were set out and instructions given to all members of the Legislature with respect to the lock-up that occurred around the budget, which was delivered on March 25. Unlike other budgets, like that presented in 2003 at Magna, this one was presented here in the Legislature for the general public to have access through the parliamentary network, for the public to have access to hear, for those who were invited to attend that day, and for all members of the Legislature to attend.

I would note that in 2003, I was locked out of a ballroom at the North Bay Best Western, as I had not been a privileged invitee to see the in-camera presentation of the budget at Magna. So I was delighted to be here on March 25, and to be able to share with all viewers across the province the presentation of the budget. I would note that all three caucuses do go through the lock-up procedure.

On the day, March 25, all members were told that before 4 p.m. they would proceed to the Legislature, escorted by a member of the minister's office and the OPP. That was set out in the instructions. The Conservative caucus was advised that they could leave shortly before 4; that's what I'm told. I am told, as well, and I am seeking to confirm, that there was some confusion between the security and the staff at that time as to how they were to be escorted.

I would note that at 4 p.m. on the afternoon the budget was introduced, a couple of members of the PC caucus did manage to get here in time and raise their concerns that the rest of their caucus had not been able to leave the lock-up. We were also concerned. We agreed with your ruling at the time, Mr. Speaker, that we stand down the reading of the budget speech until all members of the caucus from the Conservative Party were allowed to reach the chamber. The absence of members of the Conservative caucus was brought to your immediate

attention. We all agreed with your ruling that we should wait until they were allowed to arrive, and we all sat here patiently awaiting their arrival. The finance minister did not start his budget speech until he received an indication from you, Mr. Speaker.

I would note that the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka misspoke in his presentation by saying that his members were not able to be in the House when the minister was tabling his budget. That in fact is incorrect. The budget was not tabled until all members were in the House who wanted to be here. I would suggest to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke that you did not have to stop him. There was a request that we pause until all were here, and we acceded to the request. No privilege was breached. Everyone was here for the presentation of the budget. There's no *prima facie* case of privilege. All members who made their way to the chamber were in their seats when the finance minister rose and began his speech. The government intended to allow time for members of all three caucuses to make their way to the Legislature. Unfortunately, that was not the case, but remedial action was taken that allowed us to proceed.

I would note that all precedents presented by the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka are not on point. They do not involve the presentation of a budget. They involve protests, and we all know that we were very familiar with procedures around protests here during the 1999-2003 period. That was not the case in this particular circumstance. They were not dealing with the budget procedure. Twice the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka stated that they were not allowed to be in the House when the budget was presented, which in fact is false.

**1200**

I would also note that there was no lock-up the day of the throne speech. The leader of the official opposition managed to be late for that as well, despite the fact that there was no lock-up, so I question the—there's no accounting for punctuality.

The Minister of Finance will be working with the OPP and legislative security to ensure that this circumstance does not happen again, Mr. Speaker, and I will be providing you with written submissions in response to the letter we received on April 8.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I have no quarrel with people providing written submissions, but I do recall that when member Ouellette rose on a point of privilege, there was a response by way of written submissions from the government House leader, and that's fine. At the time, I queried whether it was in order for those not to become part of the record. I was shocked when I subsequently discovered that Mr. Ouellette hadn't received them either. I just assumed—it was so naive of me. It was so unusual. I just assumed that they would have been served upon Mr. Ouellette so that he could rebut, if he chose to, any portion of it.

I have no quarrel with written submissions. If there are written submissions, though, I submit to you, sir, that the



opposition parties have an opportunity to receive those submissions and to respond to them, should they wish, prior to the Speaker making a ruling.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Yes, I thank the member for Welland for that point, and I'll speak to the point of privilege, but let me just come back to that.

As the honourable member will remember, and all members of the House will recall as well, I did speak to this and encouraged this discussion to take place amongst House leaders.

For the honourable members' information, when I received the notice of the point of privilege from the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, I noted at the bottom of his point of privilege that it had been cc'd to the government House leader. That is why the honourable member from Welland, who is the House leader of the third party, received that same letter today, because I felt it was appropriate that he be aware of the information that I had from the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka that had also gone to the government House leader. I felt it was important for you to have that in responding to the point of privilege.

I would just, once again, reiterate, to encourage that discussion to take place, that I'm quite happy to have direction given to me from the House leaders in future instances, such as being given notice that the Speaker automatically copy that to the members. But again, I think this is an issue that we do need to discuss.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** With respect, this isn't privileged correspondence when one serves notice upon the Clerk and/or the Speaker, for instance, about a point of privilege to be raised. It's not privileged communication. The Speaker is free to do whatever he or she wishes to.

I submit that the Speaker has, in fact, taken control of the matter by ensuring that all caucuses receive a copy of the notice. I think that's fair and appropriate, and I think the Speaker has every right to do that unilaterally. I don't know what Mr. Miller may say to it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Perhaps, and I'm certainly prepared to do this as Speaker, to assist me in making that decision, if any of the new information that has been put forward has not been copied to all three parties, or all members are not aware of it, then I will not use that in my deliberating.

The member from Whitby-Oshawa on the same point of privilege.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** If I could just concur with the points that have been made by the member from Welland in the case of the point of privilege that was brought previously by the member from Oshawa, it would appear that a decision was made on the basis of information that wasn't available to all parties. I'd submit that it's contrary to the rules of natural justice in the sense that you need to know the case that you have to meet. When you don't see those written submissions, it's impossible to respond.

I would encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to consider a requirement that in the future, all matters be copied to all members who are involved with these points.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I would remind the member from Whitby-Oshawa that this isn't a court of law. I do recognize what you're saying, but we weren't given submissions from the member for Oshawa when he made his submission. We had to respond orally to what was presented in writing to the Speaker when it was presented to us in the House. So we had no submissions with which to respond to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** And again, I think this is a very worthy topic for the House leaders to discuss. I also, though, believe that, just as a courtesy amongst all members, if somebody is going to be writing to the Speaker with a point of privilege, the easiest thing to do to avoid any of the discussions that we're having right now is to cc it to the other two parties.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I don't want to belabour this. This isn't a court of law, but it is the court of Parliament, the highest court, if you will; a court which has the capacity to regulate itself. I don't want to quarrel on this particular issue, but in fact there are frequent references to either the high court of Parliament or the court of Parliament and its adjudicative role. I simply wanted to respond to the government House leader with that observation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

First, in response to the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka: I think it's important to clarify, since reference was made to standing order 21(b), that 21(b) refers to a matter being taken up immediately once the Speaker finds that that a prima facie case of privilege exists. It does not refer to immediate raising of the point in the first place, to clarify that.

I thank the honourable member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, the member from Welland, the government House leader and the member from Whitby-Oshawa for their comments. I will welcome any additional information and would remind members that it should be copied to all members. I will defer my decision to a later date.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1207 to 1300.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BETH DONOVAN

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I rise today to pay tribute to Beth Donovan, who passed away suddenly on April 4 at the age of 67.

Beth's influence in community care is evident with the Beth Donovan Hospice in Kemptonville bearing her name.

Donovan began her involvement with the hospice in 1994, two years after it was formed by Father Brian Hart and the parish council in Merrickville. Originally known as the Merrickville Community Hospice, the rectory at St. Ann Roman Catholic Church was used to provide respite hospice care services. A registered nurse, she joined the hospice to help coordinate volunteers and



started the first volunteer training program. As the program grew, it moved to Kemptville, and Beth served as executive director. She worked tirelessly, passionately, and was committed to ensuring that those who wanted to remain at home could and that they were cared for.

The hospice service area was also expanded and now covers those in need from Merrickville-Wolford and North Grenville to the township of Elizabethtown-Kitley.

Beth Donovan's proudest moment was when she launched the building campaign for a new 10-bed residential hospice to be built near Riverside Park in Kemptville in December 2008. It was a goal of hers to erect a building where a day hospice program could be established.

To her husband, Stanton, and their family, my sincere condolences. It is my hope that Beth Donovan's dream will soon become a reality.

### EVENTS IN STONEY CREEK

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'm pleased to tell the Legislature this afternoon about the Stoney Creek Warriors Junior B hockey team, which, by winning the Niagara district title, has moved another step toward winning the Ontario Junior B title.

In a game last week against the St. Catharines Falcons, the Stoney Creek team won game 6 to become the 2010 Golden Horseshoe conference champions.

They will now play in the round robin tournament with two other division winners. The two top teams will move on to a seven-game final for the Sutherland Cup.

I congratulate all the players, their coaches, the owners and of course the parents, all of whom play a significant role in the success of this and any sports team.

I'm delighted also to congratulate the Lake Avenue Public middle school band, which won a gold medal at this year's MusicFest. This accomplishment is even more significant when we realize that these students come from a very high-needs school, where over 85% speak English as a second language and where the school regularly meets students' nutritional, emotional and social needs. Despite these difficulties, the students' families are dedicated to their education, both academically and in music.

The next level of competition is to be held in Ottawa on May 20, but the cost of \$250 per student is way beyond their families' means, so we are seeking support for this school band of 45. As well as direct donations, to support their trip to the Ottawa competition through the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Foundation, I invite all who will be in the Stoney Creek area on April 24 to buy a \$10 ticket at the Creek Community Church, 605 Highway 8, Stoney Creek. As well as having a great dinner, you will be entertained by the Lake Avenue school band.

### EPILEPSY

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** March was Epilepsy Awareness Month, and I would like to take this opportunity to com-

mend all those individuals, families and organizations that came together to raise awareness of this neurological disorder. Epilepsy affects over 300,000 Canadians, yet many Canadians do not know much about this disorder and how it impacts the lives of those who suffer from it. This is why speaking out about this issue is so crucial and why I give this statement today.

Two organizations that I would like to specifically acknowledge for their hard work and efforts to raise epilepsy awareness are the Epilepsy Cure Initiative and Nutricia North America. These two organizations held a reception in Toronto last month with the purpose of educating the public about epilepsy and dispelling the stigma surrounding this disorder. This reception also provided the opportunity for advocates to speak about various avenues through which patients can manage this condition; for example, through nutrition and many other initiatives.

It was a wonderful event, one full of hope and promise. I commend all those who strive to raise awareness of epilepsy, to educate the public and to find a cure for this physical disorder.

### POLISH COMMUNITY

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I rise today in the House to offer my deepest sympathy and condolences to all the people of Poland and to all Canadians of Polish descent. As we know, on the weekend, the president of Poland, Lech Kaczynski, his wife, Maria, the army chief of staff, the navy chief commander, heads of the air and land forces, the national bank president, the deputy foreign minister, the army chaplain, the head of the national security office, the deputy parliamentary speaker, the Olympic committee head, the civil rights commissioner and at least two presidential aides and three members of the Legislature were killed in that tragic plane crash near Smolensk, Russia, where the plane went down in dense fog as they were flying to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre at the hands of the Stalin regime.

The void that has been created in the Polish leadership and the mourning that that country is going through are hard for any of us to comprehend. My riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is home to Wilno, Canada's first Polish settlement, and this Wednesday, Donald Tusk, the Prime Minister of Poland, was to visit there. Obviously, that state visit has been cancelled. I share, with all the Canadian Polish Kashubs from my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke who were looking forward to the Prime Minister's visit, in giving our deepest condolences to those of Polish descent all around the world.

### OPEN ONTARIO

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** Our government's Open Ontario plan is addressing three critical challenges that our province is facing.

The first is aging: One in four of us will be over the age of 65 within 20 years.



We're also confronting issues of environment and energy. We are losing biodiversity on this planet; one third of species will have disappeared by 2050.

Finally, we have the movement of an economy from one of production to one of innovation.

We are meeting the challenge of an aging population by making our neighbourhoods friendlier to seniors through Places to Grow, building transit-friendly, walkable communities for many older folk who will no longer be able to drive a car. We have also added 1,000 more police officers to the province's forces.

We are meeting the environmental challenges from energy and water by creating new solutions to climate change and water scarcity with the Green Energy Act and our new water act, while also building jobs and hopes for many Ontario families.

We are meeting the challenge of the new economy by ensuring Ontario capitalizes on the global reputation of our universities by ensuring that they become portals that fuel the dynamic economy with the best talent in the world. Our tax reforms, investments in innovation and research, and unprecedented investments in economic and cultural infrastructure, from the AGO to rapid transit, will enhance Ontario's leadership role in the new economy.

These are just a few of the ways our government's Open Ontario plan will help improve the lives of Ontarians: safer, cleaner and more accessible communities while investing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

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## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Last week, the Liberal government announced 47 new onshore wind power projects and one offshore wind project. This announcement of large wind turbine projects is in addition to last month's announcement of 510 medium-sized projects.

All of these Liberal wind projects will be built under the terms of the Green Energy Act. Under the current law, they will be built with limited public input and no municipal planning control. In communities across Ontario, the voices of constituents and elected representatives have been effectively shut down as a result of the Green Energy Act.

When the Green Energy Act was being debated, municipalities across Ontario asked the government not to curtail their ability to shape and negotiate wind power projects under the Municipal Act. Dufferin-Caledon, Mulmur, Melancthon, Amaranth and Caledon all passed resolutions urging the government not to remove their planning oversight.

The Green Energy Act changes mean that municipalities have lost all power to alter a project to meet the needs of their community. Municipalities have traditionally had responsibility for planning so they could be responsive to community needs.

I believe planning oversight should rest with our municipalities, and so today I will introduce a private

member's bill to give municipalities back their Planning Act powers for renewable energy projects.

I would urge all members of the Legislature to support my private member's bill. Ontario residents should be allowed to express their views and influence how renewable energy projects will proceed in their communities.

## PHIL HARTMAN

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I stand today to recognize the late Phil Hartman, legendary artist, actor, comedian, screenwriter and father.

Most of us know that Phil was Canadian, but what most of you do not know is that he was born in Brantford, Ontario, in 1948, and spent his formative years there, in my hometown.

Phil is known for his many contributions to the world of arts, including the renowned Bill Clinton impression on Saturday Night Live, among many other characters.

As the founder of the city of Brantford's Walk of Fame, in 1997, I personally met and became a friend of Phil during his induction as one of the first three inductees in our city. Phil came home and he loved it.

Phil's career was both diverse and impressive. Not only was he a part of the cast of Saturday Night Live for eight seasons, he was also in several commercials, movies, sitcoms and cartoons, such as the Simpsons. He was the man of a thousand faces. Tragically, his genius life was ended too soon.

I am currently working with the city of Brantford and Phil's brother Paul and his team to encourage Canada's Walk of Fame to recognize Phil Hartman in this year's ceremony. There is currently an online petition circulating, entitled "Phil Hartman for Canada's Walk of Fame 2010." You can find it on ipetitions.com. There's also a Facebook page with thousands of fans already on it. I hope we can add all our names to have Phil Hartman put onto the legendary Canadian Walk of Fame. I can see no other reason why—we should honour Phil Hartman.

## MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Ontario is a diverse province, and so are the people who represent it in the 39th Parliament. Ontario's 107 MPPs were born on four continents, in 16 different countries.

Most of us were born in North America—83 members. Of members born in Canada, 85% of Canadian-born MPPs are from Ontario. Two members were born in the Caribbean and one of us in the United States.

Europe is the birthplace of 14 MPPs: three from the Netherlands; one each from Poland, Portugal, Ireland and Germany; five from Italy; and two from Great Britain.

Asia is the birthplace of nine MPPs: four from India, two from China and one each from Iran, Pakistan and Lebanon.

In Canada, only British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and the territories did not spawn a



sitting Ontario MPP. Sixty-eight MPPs were born in Ontario, six in Quebec, two in Nova Scotia and one each in New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

We bring to this Legislature, and to the business of Ontarians, a global range of backgrounds, upbringings, education, work experience and outlooks. We speak, read and understand more languages than I was able to count, and we bring together, and to Ontarians, a truly world-class group of parliamentarians.

## POVERTY

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** In these challenging economic times, our government remains committed to breaking the cycle of poverty. We set a target to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25% over five years, a move which would take 90,000 children out of poverty by the year 2013.

Our budget announced that we will be investing \$63.5 million per year for child care to permanently fill the funding gap left by the federal government. This investment will save over 2,000 child care spaces across Toronto.

We are also moving ahead with full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds to ensure that all children have every opportunity to succeed. The early learning program will be in over 20 of our schools in my community of Scarborough this September and will serve around 1,400 kids.

Last year, we nearly doubled the Ontario child benefit, two years ahead of schedule, and are committed to fully implementing it at \$1,310 per child by 2013.

Our comprehensive tax reforms will remove 90,000 low-income Ontarians from the tax rolls.

These are just a few of the many initiatives our government has taken to help families living in poverty, and we will keep working hard to support Ontarians in need.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT (RENEWABLE ENERGY UNDERTAKINGS), 2010

### LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE (ENTREPRISES D'ÉNERGIE RENOUVELABLE)

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to amend the Planning Act with respect to renewable energy undertakings / *Projet de loi 29, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire en ce qui concerne les entreprises d'énergie renouvelable.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Currently, the Green Energy Act means that municipalities have lost all power to alter a project to meet the needs of their community. Municipalities have traditionally had responsibility for planning so they could be responsive to community needs.

I believe planning oversight should rest with our municipalities, and this bill will give municipalities back their Planning Act powers for renewable energy projects.

### EHEALTH ONTARIO SPENDING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2010

### LOI DE 2010 SUR L'OBLIGATION DE RENDRE COMPTE DES DÉPENSES DE CYBERSANTÉ ONTARIO

Mr. Chudleigh moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to provide for a public inquiry to discover the truth about Ontario's Electronic Health Records Initiative / *Projet de loi 30, Loi prévoyant la tenue d'une enquête publique pour découvrir la vérité concernant L'Initiative des dossiers de santé électroniques de l'Ontario.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The bill requires the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish a commission to inquire into and report on the spending related to Ontario's electronic health records initiative, and to make recommendations directed to the avoidance of unacceptable spending in other agencies in similar circumstances relating to Ontario's electronic health records initiative.

The commission has the powers of a commission under a public inquiry. Once the inquiry begins, the commission must make an interim report in six months and a final report in 12 months.

## PETITIONS

## TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise today on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham to present a petition as follows:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;



"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy" and use "every day. A few examples include:" rent, "coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition" from the riding of Durham "as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and to present it to Kyle, one of the new pages here at Queen's Park.

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#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Sudbury, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients ... ; and

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Khaleel.

#### ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**Mr. Dave Levac:** This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the health of the First Nations youth in Ontario is of growing concern;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue the partnership with the Right To Play partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation;

"To expand the Right To Play program to other First Nations communities; and

"To follow up these programs to ensure that other initiatives continue to promote the health of First Nations youth in Ontario."

I affix my name to this petition and pass it on to Carrington for delivery.

#### ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Natural Resources Canada has cancelled the ecoEnergy Retrofit for homes program and the Ontario government has committed to matching grants up to \$5,000;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Commit to the continuance of the provincial portion of the ecoEnergy grants."

I agree with this petition, and I'm pleased to sign it and pass it to my page, Andrew.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulation practices of the former Conservative government; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government's plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water."

I agree with this. I will affix my signature and give it to page Ahsan.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the residents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will



raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships ... and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the blended sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers."

I have signed this, and I continue to receive many, many more of these.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas we currently have no psychiatric emergency service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to support the creation of a psychiatric emergency service in emergency at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario."

I support this petition and put my signature to it.

#### POWER PLANT

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the province of Ontario, through the Ontario Energy Board, has selected a location for a gas-fired electrical generating power station within three kilometres of 16 schools and more than 11,000 homes; and

"Whereas the Oakville-Clarkson airshed is already one of the most polluted in Canada; and

"Whereas no independent environmental assessment has been completed for this proposed building location; and

"Whereas Ontario has experienced a significant reduction in demand for electrical power; and

"Whereas a recent accident at a power plant in Connecticut demonstrated the dangers that nearby residents face;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately rescind the existing plan to build a power plant at or near the current planned location ... on Royal Windsor Drive in Oakville and initiate a complete review of area power needs and potential building sites, including environmental assessments and a realistic assessment of required danger zone buffer areas."

I'm pleased to sign this petition and pass it to my page, Khaleel.

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario's youth;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

"To continue to make our children a priority for this government;

"To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

"To continue to support Ontario's families through these initiatives; and

"To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and look forward to their continued growth across the province."

I agree with the petitioners, so I put my signature on it as well.

#### ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of constituents of the riding of Durham, as well as the riding of Halton, it appears. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Natural Resources Canada has cancelled the ecoEnergy Retrofit for homes program and the Ontario government has committed to matching grants up to \$5,000;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Commit to the continuance of the provincial portion of the ecoEnergy grants."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and present it to Kyle again, the page from Oxford.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we never want to see another tragedy like Walkerton ever again. The health and safety of Ontarians can never come second to profit and greed. Clean, safe drinking water is a right all Ontarians should be able to enjoy.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;



"To continue to monitor and test our water systems;  
 "To continue to strengthen Ontario's trust in the safety of our drinking water;

"To continue to invest in new systems and personnel to monitor and test our water;

"To never forget the mistakes of the past and always hold our water supply to the highest standard; and

"To continue to invest in the health and safety of Ontarians through our water supply."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Andrea.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I have a petition, also from my riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

"Whereas the municipality of Clarington passed resolution C-049-09 in support of Lakeridge Health Bowmanville; and

"Whereas area doctors, hospital staff and citizens have raised concerns that Bowmanville's hospital could turn into little more than a site to stabilize and transfer patients for treatment outside the municipality"—not unlike other communities;

"Whereas Clarington is a growing community of over 80,000; and

"Whereas we support the continuation of the Lakeridge Bowmanville site through access to on-site services, including emergency room, internal medicine and general surgery;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the McGuinty government take the necessary actions to fund our hospitals equally and fairly. And furthermore, we request that the clinical services plan of the Central East LHIN address the need for the Bowmanville hospital to continue to offer a complete range of services appropriate for the growing community of Clarington."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to Owen, one of the new pages here at Queen's Park.

1330

### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario's youth;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

"To continue to make our children a priority for this government;

"To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

"To continue to support Ontario's families through these initiatives; and

"To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and look forward to their continued growth across the province."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition in support of the Eglinton LRT:

"Whereas investing in public transit and infrastructure is important to Toronto and to Ontario to help reduce gridlock, improve air quality and create jobs; and

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line is a much-needed link that will travel along Eglinton Avenue, from Kennedy station in the east to Pearson airport in the west"—connecting Durham region with Peel region;

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would create 10,000 green jobs in construction, engineering and public transit;

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would be a boost for neighbourhood improvement, promoting local business and increasing property values for current retailers and homeowners; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has found it necessary to phase in the public transit projects due to the current ... economic downturn;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make the Eglinton LRT line a priority when developing the plan to phase in the public transit projects."

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulation practices ... ; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:



"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government's plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water."

I'm pleased to sign and to support this petition and to ask page Owen to carry it for me.

#### PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** A number of petitions came in today addressed to Premier McGuinty and health minister Matthews titled "Please Don't Cut Community Pharmacy Funding."

"I am an Ontario community pharmacy customer and patient. I am aware that the Ontario government is considering cuts to elements of community pharmacy funding. I depend on the convenient, accessible advice and services I get from my pharmacy. I want to ensure that my pharmacist is there when I need him. I want to know that I can talk to my pharmacist after work when I can't get to my doctor's office or when my doctor's office is closed. I want to know that my pharmacy will continue to be able to provide valuable health services to my community, so please do not make the cuts to the neighbourhood health care my community pharmacy provides."

The final statement: "I support my community pharmacy," as I do as well. I will affix my signature to this.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### 2010 ONTARIO BUDGET

##### BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2010

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 1, 2010, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some time left. You see, my debate was split. I had an opportunity to speak some time ago, and in fact it's hard to keep track of what we were up to or what I might have been speaking about a couple of weeks back, because since then we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord on Easter Sunday, we then had a break, and of course yesterday Phil Mickelson won his third green jacket as the Masters champion. So, much has transpired since I last spoke on this budget.

A lot of things have changed, but some things haven't changed, Madam Speaker. I said "Mr." to start, and I see that that also has been transformed, into "Madam." One thing that hasn't changed is, it's still a bad budget. It was a bad budget before Easter and it's a bad budget now.

The other thing about the budget is, you just have to wonder where it was coming from. Since they tabled this budget, have you heard the Premier going out on his soapbox and saying how we need municipalities to tighten their belts and we need them to rein in salaries in the municipal sector, we need to do this and we need to do that, and we need to show leadership on restraint? As Randall Denley wrote in his column in the *Ottawa Citizen* a couple of days after the budget—and he didn't say it in these words, but I'll say it: What a joke.

If the Premier wanted to show leadership on restraint—he had an opportunity when this recession was deepening and it was clear to everybody that business as usual was simply not going to work anymore—he would have at least had the moral authority to stand in his place and say to public service unions, be they provincial, be they municipal, be they the MUSH sector, such as universities, schools and hospitals, "We're instituting restraint today." But no, he let a whole year and a half go by, almost two years, doing nothing, with his head in the sand. And now he stands up there as the champion of restraint. How duplicitous is that? It's unbelievable that he can portray himself as being the champion of fiscal responsibility after squandering the opportunity and ceding the moral authority that he actually had when this recession was deepening to at least get people to buy in and agree that, yes, we all have a role to play and we all can play our part. No, he makes sure he signs all of the contracts. He forces hospitals to sign long-term contracts with their staff that go years into the future. For example, now he tells hospitals, "By the way, you might get 1.6%, or maybe you won't, even though we've already forced you to sign contracts that obligate you to much greater spending than that."

Now he wants to be Dalton the defender, when we all know he is Dalton the debt doubler. Shame on him, because before we leave this place in 2012, the debt of this province will have doubled under Dalton's watch.

Hopefully, mercifully, he will not be the Premier at that time, because I really do, in my heart of hearts, believe that this province cannot take another term of this rudderless, aimless, planless—I was going to say "shameless" and "blameless" just because they rhyme, but they wouldn't apply, because they take the blame and they should be ashamed of what they've done to this province in the six or seven years they've been in government, particularly with regard to our fiscal condition.

The Minister of Finance talks about how we're going to get out of this. He's got an eight-year plan. Well, his eight-year plan is predicated on holding government spending to an increase of about 1.8% or 1.9%.

1340

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My friend from Wellington-Halton Hills says "1.9%." We want to be accurate because we wouldn't want the Liberals getting upset. It's 1.9% per year for that time frame.



Since they've been in government, they've never been able to keep spending below—I think it is about a 6% increase. Oh, there's a little chart here. It's a great chart, but I'll have to put on my glasses. These are their spending increases: "holding the annual growth in program expense to an average of 1.9% beyond 2012-13."

Given their record, that's not only fiction—fiction even has a basis sometimes in reality. It may not be true, but it has a basis in reality. This has no basis in reality whatsoever, not the reality that we've seen under Dalton McGuinty and Dwight Duncan.

I want to touch on a couple of things before my time runs out, unless I get unanimous consent to speak longer.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Apparently, the government House leader is not in agreement, so I will move as expeditiously as possible.

I would like to talk about something that is very, very troubling in my riding. I was talking to my friend from Oshawa just a minute ago about how the new Minister of Natural Resources from Brampton—that rural place outside of Toronto called "Brampton"—is now telling people in rural Ontario that she fully backs the Endangered Species Act enacted by the previous minister. No thought was given to the ramifications and the effect that the regulations coming out of that act are going to have on rural people.

You see, when the act was first tabled, and as we went through committee, there was an undertaking by the then Minister of Natural Resources that they would use the Crown Forest Sustainability Act—it's a bedrock piece of legislation that has stood the test of time in preserving and protecting our forests, by its very name, the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. The minister undertook to the industry that they would use that act when bringing in regulations to protect habitat for endangered species or species that were threatened. Once they passed the legislation—and this is no surprise to you, Madam Speaker, I know, and no surprise to anybody else in this House—they broke their promise and decided to go to a permitting system. Permitting systems don't work because all of the advocates who are opposed to logging or any development or doing anything on rural land that allows us to try to raise our standard of living are going to oppose all of those permitting applications, which means they'll be tied up in the courts and nothing will ever happen.

Am I going to get that time, or do I say "goodnight" for—

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Say "goodnight."

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Goodnight.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** I'm not sure where the previous speaker was coming from. It's not this country or this planet.

We are a government here that is building the tax base, not the tax burden. Our friends over there, in good times, managed to rack up a \$6-billion deficit while we

were growing revenue. I was mayor of a city at the time. We need no lessons from these folks. I cut the cumulative deficit of my government in half, reduced taxes every year and took the credit rating to better than Ontario's on a small tax base. These guys couldn't manage a two-car funeral.

The people of Toronto Centre remember all too well how they solve deficit problems. They closed the Wellesley hospital. They closed the Central Hospital. We're building the tax base.

Their finance minister federally has said that the growth rates in Canada are sufficient right now to build through growth in the tax base—to build us out of the deficit, which is exactly what we're doing.

So, why do the federal Conservative members who used to sit in this House understand our strategy and are imitating it, but their colleagues in opposition don't seem to get it? They want to go back to closing hospitals, stripping our school system, downloading social services and health, to avoid their responsibilities, on municipalities. They have left in their wake in municipal government the biggest downloading onto municipal governments in history and never gave them the tax revenues, which we did with the City of Toronto Act and are continuing to do in our infrastructure strategies.

It is passing strange to me that there is such a growing disconnect between the Conservatives' engagement strategy in the economy nationally and our cousins here to our right. We understand, as do the federal Conservatives, that the HST is going to build hundreds of thousands of jobs in Ontario. We understand, through Open Ontario, the global opening up of our universities to make them the portals to the most talented people in the world, to bring them here—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Quite frankly, it took over 160 years to get the budget to where it was, and in six short years we've virtually doubled it, to the point where we're spending \$2 million an hour more than we're taking in. You show me exactly where the great benefits to the province of Ontario have been, and I question that.

Oh, yes, we hear about all these great things, but quite frankly, I don't see the doubling of the budget and the doubling of the response in the communities and our places.

Oh, yes, the member speaks quite openly about their great work, yet when I speak to individuals about the great things that happened in their community—and the police chiefs are very near to that—it's considerably different than the projected image that has been brought here to this chamber.

I have a lot of concerns about what's taking place in this province. When the times were good, we should have been banking things and making sure that industry was strong. End result: Look at the budget deficit that we're spending today. Who's going to pay that but our kids and generations and generations to come?



I think that individuals who stand up and grandstand about the fact that this province is doing a great and wonderful job with the government they have had better look twice at what's happening in this province, because quite frankly, I don't think generations will understand what is taking place and being discussed today until they have to start to pay for it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** It's my pleasure to add a few comments to the speech that was given by the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I was one of the ones who were willing to give him more time, because I thought you were on a roll and doing quite well, so I'm sorry we don't get to hear you more.

I can say that as a member representing rural Ontario, I share with him some of the comments that he has made. Some of the strategies laid out in that budget will really have a detrimental effect on people living in northern and rural areas, some of the constituents that he represents.

I just ended a tour of northern and rural hospitals with the Ontario Health Coalition—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm always pleased to comment on anything that my Conservative colleague from the Ottawa Valley has to say.

Let me just touch for a minute on something he raised just before he was forced to sit down, and that is what is happening in forest communities not only in the Ottawa Valley but across northern Ontario and the fact that here we have a budget that the government proposes is going to do something about that but in fact is not going to do anything at all.

The McGuinty government has finally acknowledged that their policy of driving industrial hydro rates through the roof is forcing the closure of one paper mill after another after another. When you do not have paper mills, then you have fewer pulp mills. When you have fewer pulp mills, you have fewer places for sawmills to send their chips to. Sawmills have to be able to sell their lumber and sell their residual chips to stay in business. So you have community after community closing, literally tens of thousands of hard-working people out of work. This government, after five years, finally acknowledges that their policy of driving industrial hydro bills through the roof has contributed greatly to this.

But what do they propose to do? Do they propose to reduce industrial hydro rates? No. They're going to essentially cap the industrial hydro rate increase for the next three years, I would argue, just to get them through the next election. But this is not going to reopen one single paper machine. It's not going to reopen one single sawmill. So these communities, these workers, find themselves out of work, in a desperate situation, with a budget which doesn't do anything to address the real problems.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has up to two minutes to respond.

1350

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I appreciate the comments from the members from Toronto Centre, Oshawa, Nickel Belt and Kenora-Rainy River. I always appreciate comments.

I do want to say thank you to the members from Oshawa and Kenora-Rainy River, and Nickel Belt as well, because they actually commented on some things that I was saying, whereas I have to ask the member for Toronto Centre: How do you stand in your place in this House and chastise a government that had a deficit in the year of mad cow, SARS—which was an unknown disease in the world at that time; it cost over a billion and a half dollars—a hydro outage where 50 million people were out of hydro in eastern North America, which also cost almost a billion dollars; and then you had mad cow disease, which also cost in the neighbourhood of half a billion to a billion dollars? We're talking about \$4 billion worth of things to deal with that were unheard of before, in this country or any other.

As well, the sad truth is that that deficit could have been dealt with in that fiscal year if this government, which was elected in October 2003, actually wanted to do something about it. But the truth is, they wanted that deficit to remain. They wanted that deficit to exist so that they could have something to hold against the previous government, which had actually eliminated four consecutive years of \$10-billion deficits in the past when they did come to government. This is a government that has a deficit of \$21.7 billion, which will double the debt in the next term of office of this Legislature. In fact, by 2012-13, the debt of this province will be double and our children, our grandchildren and the new pages working here today will be the ones who are going to have to deal with the debt because of Dalton McGuinty and Dwight Duncan and their irresponsible fiscal policies.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** It's my pleasure to rise today to add my voice to a few comments regarding our budget. The first one I'd like to talk about is that in the budget we have this one paragraph about drug reform. It is part of this big document, and—remember—one paragraph. Basically, all it talks about is that the government will reform the personal allowance and they will define what normal business practice is. We have found out since what that will mean. It will mean that the price that is paid for generic drugs will be altered substantially.

So, at the base of it, I think everybody agrees that if you can get a better deal to pay for your drugs, that will be something good. If the price of drugs decreases, it makes them more affordable and easier for people to access. It's a good thing. But, as is often the case, a good intention can go bad if it's not wisely done. I want everybody to realize the opportunity for your MPP—all of us—to influence this is very minimal. All there is in the budget is one paragraph that talks about changing the professional allowance and defining what normal business practice is. Those are broad comments. Every-



thing else—should we pay as a generic price 25% of the brand name, or 40% or 35%? We presently pay 50%. None of this is part of this bill. It will all be dealt with afterwards in regulation, which basically means that for us to have an informed decision, we need more than one paragraph. Everything else will be done away from your MPP, with the MPP not having the chance to participate.

We have to realize that right now, the province of Ontario pays for drugs for a number of people. It pays for older people, people on Ontario disability—they pay through the Trillium. There's a number of places. Out of all the millions of dollars they pay for drugs, 24% of that goes to pay for generic drugs, which means that 76% of the expenses have nothing to do with generic. They have to do with name brands.

Are there savings to be made in drugs? Absolutely, there are major savings, but right now, we're going after the small fish. We're going after the 24%. What happened to the 76%? There are great opportunities to reduce savings on a much bigger part of the pie, a much bigger part of the expenses, if we look at how we reimburse brand-name drugs. There was a very good project being put forward to that effect. Under academic detailing, which is the way that brand names are marketed to physicians, this was cancelled. So our government had the opportunity to substantially affect the 76% of the expenses that we spend on drugs but chose not to do so, and in place of it went under the 24%. There's nothing wrong with achieving savings; it's in the way that you do it.

The second thing we have to say is that right now, what is on the table through regulation—not in the bill, because none of this is in the bill—there will be \$800 million worth of savings. The government will reinvest about \$150 million through compensating pharmacists for other services that they render: all good, so far. But you have to realize that you cannot take \$800 million out of an industry and think that there will not be repercussions. There will be changes. I want to make sure that those changes are not going to be on the backs of Ontarians who live in rural and northern areas. Right now, to give a \$1 increase—from \$7 to \$8—in reimbursement for dispensing fees is not my idea of having thoroughly studied what will be the effect on northern and rural hospitals. I have a real fear that what will happen is that you will see a decrease in service, a lack of access, as well as a hike in prices of drugs for people living in northern and rural areas.

There is no Walmart or Costco in Nickel Belt and there will never be one. We just don't have the kind of city that supports those. Everybody who lives in a big city will continue to have the \$2 dispensing fee, \$4 dispensing fee, at the big chains. People in Nickel Belt are paying \$14 in dispensing fees. This is a big difference, a sevenfold increase, whether you buy your drugs in a big city or you buy them in northern and rural areas.

With those changes, the effects on northern and rural accessibility and dispensing fees have not really been

explained. As I said, as your MPP, I will have no occasion to talk about those except right now. There will be no discussion of this bill in and of itself, only through the budget bill. To me, this is an important reform, a reform that every single one of your MPPs—you should have a chance to talk to your MPP and let your MPP represent your voice in the changes in this new bill, but we won't have an opportunity to do this; everything is being pushed into regulation.

To make matters worse, it seems like we're seeing an escalation of tensions between the pharmacists' association and our minister. The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care decided to send a very strongly worded letter to the pharmacists of Ontario, the kind of letter that will be perceived as escalating a conflict. If you know you have a conflict with professional care providers, what is there to gain by escalating this conflict? Really, they should try to work together. If we want a good pharmacy service that provides the services we need to every Ontarian, no matter where you live, then the ministry has to work with them, not escalate a conflict.

I could give some suggestions. First of all, why aren't pharmacists part of the interdisciplinary teams that we're putting into place? So few of them are. If you bring in a pharmacist within an interdisciplinary team, pay them the salary that they're worth and make sure that they are free to offer the full gamut of services that a pharmacist is capable of offering, that would bring new service to the people of Ontario at a fair price, as well as maintain access to drugs no matter where you live in Ontario. But we're not looking at this. We're looking at bringing care elements into what is basically a business model. While the business model may try to bring some care elements into it, at the end of the day it's still going to be a business model. If you're serious about wanting to improve health care, then start by putting a framework forward that will allow for a care model, and then, if you want, bring business elements into it. We are going at it the other way around.

1400

The second thing I wanted to talk about that is also in the budget is the new hospital funding model. It's called HBAM, health-based allocation model. HBAM is a model that is being put forward in this new budget for funding of hospital services. This model has been around for quite some time. It has been tried in other jurisdictions in other developed countries on this earth and has failed. It always leads to the same thing: a concentration of services in big urban centres.

Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against a concentration of services to some extent, because if you do 1,000 cataract surgeries a month, you're going to be very good at it. You will have good results and you will have good health outcomes, and this is something that we can all support. But it cannot come at the exclusion of accessibility. It is this balance between concentration of care to a point where you become very good at doing something versus having no access at all if you live



outside of those major centres where those concentrations of services are offered.

I can give the example that is already happening in Sudbury. The Sudbury Regional Hospital is the hospital that offers services to the people of Nickel Belt. What happens is that already you can see—take hip and knee surgeries, which are part of the wait-times strategy where the government has started to put fixed costs for the procedure, and the more procedures you do, the more money you get etc.—very much along the philosophy of HBAM. What happened? If those I would call the healthy mobile people of Nickel Belt and Sudbury don't want to wait the length of time that it takes to get the surgery done at Sudbury Regional Hospital, they go to Toronto. It is their choice. They choose to do it. Their physician makes arrangements for them to have it done faster in Toronto.

What does that mean? That means that all of the healthy, mobile and wealthy—because you have to have some bucks to be able to afford the travel—go to Toronto. The more complex cases, the cases that may require more follow-up rehab, stay in Sudbury. So already you start to see this concentration of health care services that gives a very good outcome in big urban centres to the detriment of people in northern Ontario.

I can give you examples throughout this province where it has to do with people living in rural Ontario and northern Ontario. When it comes to health care, access is just as important. You have to bring forward policies that balance the two, but this new HBAM is not something that will do this. It is something that will create big centres of excellence—so far, so good—but it cannot be exclusive and to the detriment of northern and rural.

I also wanted to talk a little bit about the independent expert advisory panel that will be coming. We, New Democrats, have always been supporters of research and clinical guidelines. But I thought this was what we had in the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, better known as ICES. They produce excellent quality reports that can be implemented to develop best practices in the health field. So what are we trying to do here with this? Again, it's not clear. We are asked to make a decision and vote on a budget that has very low substance—most of it will come later.

They also talk about improved provider and executive accountability. I and very many New Democrats before me have asked for Ombudsman oversight of hospitals and long-term-care facilities to give people who have complaints, who have gone through the existing channels of dealing with their hospitals and LHINs and who are still not satisfied, access to the Ombudsman, and to let him or her do their job. But no; this government has been steadfast in its refusal to allow Ombudsman oversight of our hospitals and long-term-care facilities, to the detriment of care.

We have seen fantastic results with some of the investigation that the Ombudsman has done into the fringes of health care, because he—Mr. Marin, right now—hasn't got the right to investigate hospitals directly: only when

they are under supervision or in their dealings with the ministry. This is not acceptable. If we want better accountability, then let's start by bringing in Ombudsman oversight.

Je voulais également parler de la francophonie. La francophonie, dans notre budget, on peut dire là qu'elle brille par son absence, dans un premier temps. Je ne dirais pas qu'il y a des pages et des pages de dire « la francophonie ». En fait, il n'y en a pas. C'est quand même un document assez exhaustif. J'oublie le nombre de pages, mais je vais m'en rafraîchir la mémoire : 196 pages. On aurait pensé que peut être un paragraphe sur la francophonie, si ça aurait pu—mais non, on n'a pas eu ça.

Par contre, qu'est-ce qu'on sait? C'est qu'on aura la maternelle et le jardin à temps plein pour les petits enfants. Pour la francophonie, ce n'est pas quelque chose de nouveau. Les écoles francophones, tant du côté public que du côté catholique, ont adopté depuis plusieurs années des programmes de maternelle à temps plein avec le système de garde avant et après l'école. Ces systèmes-là nous ont permis de développer des réseaux dans des communautés souvent minoritaires, et ces réseaux-là ont été capables de s'épanouir et d'amener une richesse à la francophonie.

Lorsqu'on regarde le cas exemplaire de l'Hôpital Montfort, ce que M. Caza avait démontré pour gagner sa cause—M. Caza est l'avocat qui a défendu la cause Montfort—c'est que, pour les francophones, les institutions sont tellement importantes. Il décrit souvent la francophonie comme les gens qui nagent, qui nagent, qui nagent, puis, quand tu es francophone en Ontario, tu ne peux jamais arrêter. Le seul moment où tu peux te reposer, c'est quand tu arrives dans un îlot de francophonie, puis ça, ce sont nos institutions francophones.

Bien, le système de garde avant et après l'école et le système de maternelle à temps plein dans la francophonie, ça nous a permis de faire ça. Ça nous a permis de développer les îlots qui font que la francophonie est plus forte et capable de rayonner et de s'épanouir. Maintenant, on a un gouvernement qui arrive avec ses gros sabots et qui dit, « On a un programme magnifique qu'on va mettre en place qui n'existe nulle part ailleurs. » Ils ne parlent certainement pas aux francophones quand ils disent ça, parce que nous, dans la francophonie, on l'a depuis longtemps. Ils vont mettre ça en place, mais dans un cadre tellement rigide que tout le beau travail qui s'est fait, tout le rayonnement qui s'est fait, les divers organismes qui se sont développés qui font maintenant partie de la fabrique francophone de notre province, sont maintenant à risque. Ils sont à risque parce qu'ils ont mis en place un cadre législatif tellement serré que les partenariats établis ne pourront pas continuer. On vient de forcer un chambardement d'une magnitude peu vue, pour aucune raison. Pourquoi est-ce qu'on ne donne pas un peu plus de temps? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on ne donne pas des paramètres un peu plus flexibles pour reconnaître que dans la francophonie, ce n'est pas du révolutionnaire, ce que le gouvernement est en train de faire là—c'est



quelque chose qui existe depuis longtemps—et apprendre de nos meilleures pratiques qui sont développées au cours des années? Ça démontrerait vraiment un gouvernement qui est engagé envers la francophonie.

Dans un dernier temps, par rapport à la francophonie également, j'ai été très heureuse de voir qu'on va célébrer, le 25 septembre qui s'en vient, la journée franco-ontarienne. C'est quelque chose qui me fait plaisir. De plus en plus, les gens se rendent compte que tout l'appui que ce projet de loi-là a reçu vaut la peine d'être amené un pas de plus en en faisant un congé férié. J'espère que le gouvernement va écouter non seulement les Franco-Ontariens, mais tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes qui veulent vraiment donner à la francophonie le respect qu'il se doit, en faisant de la journée du 25 septembre une journée de congé férié pour tout le monde en Ontario. Vous allez voir qu'il y a des pétitions en ce sens qui s'en viennent.

1410

Absent from the budget is something that we all need. This morning, there were a number of questions about ALC, alternate-level-of-care, patients in our hospitals. Right now, if you look at all of the beds in all of the hospitals in Ontario, 19% of them are occupied by somebody needing alternate level of care.

The solution to the alternate-level-of-care crisis that has grown in so many communities is to prevent more frail, elderly people from getting in trouble in the first place and ending up taking up a bed in the hospital from which they're not able to be discharged. The solution to this is to give them the care they need in their own homes through a strong and robust home care system. But our home care system is broken, and unless the government is willing to fix it, we will continue to see dozens and hundreds of elderly, frail Ontarians getting in trouble in their own homes, ending up in emerg, ending up in a hospital bed, and not being able to be discharged from that hospital in a safe and respectful manner. They end up being labelled as alternate-level-care patients and they cost a hospital a lot of trouble. It is not a hospital problem, but the hospitals are ending up facing the problem. Absent from the budget was home care reform.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'd like to thank the member for Nickel Belt for her comments, those in English et aussi en français. She raised a number of points relating to health care that I'd like to take and elaborate on.

One of the things that not merely the budget does, but certainly builds on the throne speech, in the Open Ontario plan, is the commitment to a very strong public health care system. To this end, the budget has pledged new legislation to improve accountability within the health system.

Over the past years, among the things that we've seen that are a major benefit, particularly to those of us in the fast-growing areas of the greater Toronto area, has been the capacity expansion to enable people in fast-growing

communities to have fair, proportionate access to health care.

Out in the area that I live in, in Mississauga, we've seen in the last few years major capital expansions of our hospitals that provide us with the clearly accountable, publicly funded, publicly run facilities that we need to deliver the quality and the amount of health care to a growing population, when and where it needs it.

I think we're going to see the degree of segmentation that we're seeing in Mississauga, where at Trillium, it's the best place in the world for cardiac care. Between the time of a 911 call and the time at which treatment actually begins, nowhere in the world does it happen faster than at the Trillium Health Centre. We're seeing at Credit Valley Hospital similar advances in the speed and the effectiveness of cancer treatment in the regional cancer centre.

These are only two areas of the type of progress that's at work that's ongoing in this year's budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The member spoke well about the budget and its effect on Ontarians. I was particularly very interested in the pharmaceutical area. The speaker was quite right: That's going to have a very detrimental effect on small pharmacies located around Ontario.

The same kind of thing happened in your first term of office, when the small pharmacists were set upon and weren't considered in the overall plan. I think it speaks to one of the recurring themes in this government, in that they don't do a lot of consulting before they come out with these plans and they don't know the consequences of how it's going to take effect in the real marketplace. That's a real problem, particularly if you're a small pharmacy in a small town, where perhaps you're struggling anyway but providing a great service to the people of that area. There are going to be some \$650 million or \$800 million taken out of the pharmaceutical business. You can't take out that much money without doing irreparable harm.

Of course, that harm is unevenly distributed, and it affects small pharmacies far more than it will affect large pharmacies. It will also affect large pharmacies, but they will probably survive this process. The member is quite right again, in that northern Ontario is going to be disproportionately affected because the population up there is so small. All pharmacies are small in the north in comparison to large pharmacies in southern Ontario.

The member for Kenora-Rainy River talked about the devastation that has occurred in northern Ontario and how this budget hasn't effected anything positive for the north. This is just one more thing that is going to affect the north negatively.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It's always not just a pleasure but so insightful to hear the NDP health critic address these issues. The member for Nickel Belt has proven herself to be not just an astute critic of this government's short-



comings, but also someone who is eminently capable and demonstrates that on a daily basis in coming forward with options and solutions that are better suited to meet the needs of real Ontarians.

When she talks about this budget and health care in the context of this budget, I can't help but hearken back to down where I come from in Niagara and Mr. McGuinty's closure of emergency rooms at the Fort Erie hospital and the Port Colborne hospital. It's no longer hypothetical to suggest that people are going to die as a result of those closures, because we've already got a coroner's inquest into one death. I don't know whether there will have to be coroners' inquests into other deaths.

You see, what happens if you're in a motor vehicle accident or if you suffer a trauma and you're down toward the far end of the QEW, down toward Fort Erie, is, they can't take you to the Fort Erie hospital anymore. The emergency room is gone. It doesn't exist. It's closed. The doors are locked, bolted and barred. So you have to commence a lengthy and tortuous, treacherous and sometimes deadly search for emergency rooms in the northern part of the Niagara region. If you get to St. Catharines, you have to wait four and a half hours, because, you see, what happens when you shut down emergency rooms, the pressure on the remaining emergency rooms is compounded—just like the young man Andrea Horwath talked about, waiting four and a half hours in St. Catharines and then his mom finally throws him in the car and takes him further up the QEW, where he finally gets treatment.

I'm looking forward to speaking to this motion in my own right.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm so anxious that a couple of minutes ago I thought I might actually pre-empt the member from Welland, I was on my feet so quickly.

I want to take a couple of minutes to speak to the member from Nickel Belt's comments in respect to the budget. She spent quite a bit of time speaking around the matters of health care, and I want to reflect on how investments in health care affect budgets and how they affect people's lives.

In my own riding, in the general area, I had the opportunity recently to participate in the opening of a new emergency department at the Ajax-Pickering site of the Rouge Valley Health System. It was something that was planned for and fought for by the community for a period of eight or 10 years. Funding came along, and just in this past year we managed to open that, and the funding that is flowing into that now will allow it to serve a community that has grown probably by 50% or 70% during the time frame in which it was being planned for and built.

I had the opportunity more recently to attend Lake-ridge Health in Oshawa, and I see the member from Oshawa is here today. We were there at the same time on a dialysis unit. I think the number of stations are a four-pod—I'm going to say 40; I may miss the number of

actual stations. It's somewhere in that range. It's a four-pod unit that is state of the art, that will obviously be funded through the financing of health during this and subsequent operational years. It's a facility much needed in Durham region to service the needs of some 600,000 people, with dialysis facilities that were certainly not being met—the member opposite spoke extensively in regard to health care within her comments, and I just wanted the opportunity in the two minutes to be able to reflect on how investments in budgets can affect lives and communities and health in a very significant way.

**1420**

For me, it's particularly important because I happen to come from a geography and a jurisdiction where a tremendous amount of growth has been and continues to go on, and those investments are so critically important in those communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Nickel Belt has up to two minutes to respond.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I will use my two minutes to quote from Hansard from 1975. It goes:

"Everything that is fairly modest, the Minister of Health is able to do. But in the three most critical areas of health" care "policy, he is"—it was a he at the time—"as all his predecessors, completely defunct. Do you realize, Mr. Speaker, that we have entered the year 1975"—that was Mr. Lewis talking at the time—"and there is no program for the serious construction of community health centres right across Ontario to reduce the cost of hospital beds in Ontario and to shift the emphasis to preventive medicine? Do you realize that we have come through"—at the time—"32 years of Tory rule, and in March 1975, we still don't have a preventive medical alternative to the most rigid, inflexible and inefficient delivery system men and women can devise?"

"Do you realize ... that we have come right through to March 1975, and despite all the talk of the last years, we still have not arranged an alternate method of payment for the medical profession? They are still on fee for service. They are still getting their \$45,000 plus per year—and every year going up. We still haven't worked out salary arrangements, capitation arrangements, fee for service plus salary—all of the things that we have talked about—to prevent health from being destroyed in terms of the charge on the public purse. None of that has occurred. All of the major problems then remain acute failures of political leadership."

That was Stephen Lewis in 1975, and I would say that those are still absent from this budget. We're still not looking at prevention. We're still not looking at more community health centres. We are still not looking at alternate ways; fee for service does not serve this province well.

It was interesting to hear from the members from Mississauga, Halton, Welland and Pickering-Scarborough East. I appreciate their comments.

What's missing from the budget is a strategy that would bring us sustainability. It's not there.



**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Chiarelli:** I'm pleased to rise and debate the budget today, but if I can indulge the House and make a few comments on the reality that I've just returned to the House from a by-election, I'd like to make a few comments and speak about a few thanks that I want to extend to some of the people upon my return.

This is my first opportunity to debate since my re-election, my fourth time being elected as an MPP, on March 4 of this year. As you know, I served from 1987 to 1997 in this House, representing the riding of Ottawa West, and I've been away from this place for a period of 13 years.

I've had a very warm welcome back from the Speaker, the Deputy Speakers and from the 28 members of this Legislature that I sat with previously for my last two or three years. I'm now returning to something like 18 caucus members that I sat with then and 10 members from the opposition, and they've all given me a very warm return and welcome, including the Clerk, the staff of the Clerk's office and the administrators at the Legislature. I just want to extend a very significant thank you and gratitude for what they have done in welcoming me back.

I must say, upon my return, that I was expecting to see three or four bronze statues on the front lawn: perhaps a statue of the member from St. Catharines, Jim Bradley; or Carleton-Mississippi Mills, Norm Sterling; or perhaps York Centre, Monte Kwinter; or from Davenport, Tony Ruprecht. I'm very pleased to find that they were all inside the building, working very, very hard and continuing the leadership that I've always known them to be demonstrating in this place.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the voters of Ottawa West-Nepean for electing me as their member of Parliament. This is the fourth time that I have been elected as an MPP. On one occasion, I was elected by more than 50% of the voters; the other three times I was elected by something between 40% and 50% of the voters, so I'm generally elected by less than 50% of the voters. Even so, I've always served on the basis that I represent all constituents, regardless of their political stripe, political or personal philosophy or lifestyle, where they live in the riding or for how long. My door is open to all individuals, all groups and all stakeholders. This was true in my former life as an MPP, as the elected regional chair of Ottawa-Carleton and as the mayor of Ottawa for six years. As a matter of principle, I have always believed in collaboration, facilitation and partnership with other elected officials at other levels of government, with stakeholders and with the members of the other parties. These are some of my values that I bring back to Queen's Park.

Speaking of values, I revisited my maiden speech, which I delivered to this House on November 19, 1987. I just want to make one quote from that speech because I believe it's as relevant today as it was then.

"I mentioned earlier that I would speak of some principles. I believe in them, and I believe many others in

this House from all parties believe in them. I also am of the opinion that they are embodied in the throne speech. I believe they are worth repeating, in the words of a well-known social democrat.

"It means we campaign to win on the merits of our causes and to break new frontiers in education, housing, social services, health care, and social justice.

"It means we speak for those who work for a living, white-collar and blue-collar, young professionals, men and women in small businesses trying to prove their worth and earn a living.

"It means we speak for minorities who have not yet entered the mainstream.

"And it means we speak for women indignant that we had refused to etch into our governmental commandments a simple rule, 'Thou shalt not sin against equality.'"

Those are still some of the tenets that I come to this place with.

Before I speak about our government's agenda, as reflected in the throne speech and the budget speech, I want to speak briefly about my riding, a community benefiting immensely from our government's policies and programs, again quoting from my original maiden speech.

"First, let me say that the greatest resource, the greatest pride and the greatest strength we have in" the riding "is our people. The citizens I have the privilege and honour to serve include the second-highest number of senior citizens ... of any constituency in Canada. These elderly represent a feisty, active, self-reliant and proud segment of our community." Many of them, "as we know, require the special help afforded by our social assistance infrastructure, yet even these seniors accept their adversity with courage, dignity and understanding. These seniors hold a special place in our hearts and remain one of my riding's most cherished ... assets."

We are blessed in Ottawa West-Nepean with the benefit of the foresight of those who came before us, elected officials and otherwise. Almost the entire northern boundary of my riding of Ottawa West-Nepean is publicly owned and accessible to the public along the majestic Ottawa River, thanks in large part to former Nepean heads of council Ben Franklin and Andy Haydon. We enjoy expansive green spaces and world-class recreational facilities, neighbourhoods with community pride and an exceptional quality of life. We have leading institutions like Algonquin College and the Queensway Carleton Hospital, and we are blessed with exceptional community and social services: the Pinecrest-Queensway community health and resource centre, the Carlington community health and resource centre, the Olde Forge seniors centre, Nepean Seniors' Home Support and many others.

Ottawa est une ville où les Franco-Ontariens ont une fierté très forte de leur histoire et de leur patrimoine. Aujourd'hui, dans ma circonscription, avec une population francophone de plus en plus importante, nous avons quatre écoles élémentaires et une école secondaire



de langue française, et un centre communautaire robuste, Franc-Ouest.

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Pendant 10 ans, j'étais fier de travailler avec mes collègues Jean Poirier, Gilles Morin et le père du projet de loi 8, Ben Grandmaître, qui ont toujours servi leur circonscription et la population franco-ontarienne avec distinction. Je suis heureux que le flambeau soit aujourd'hui porté par mes collègues d'Ottawa-Vanier et de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell.

I say thank you to the visionary community leaders who came before us, and I will try to lead by following their example.

I returned to Queen's Park because I want to support the Premier's vision and agenda for Ontario. That includes transforming our economy for the future through our tax reform policy, through our energy policy and through our education policy.

Firstly, tax reform policy and the HST: In January, when I announced that I was going to be seeking the nomination in Ottawa West-Nepean, I had a media conference, and the media asked me how I would defend, or try to defend, the HST. I told them that I would not try to defend it but that I would be a very strong advocate of our tax reform policy, which includes the HST.

I mentioned at that time that we were now experiencing, as of January 1, the largest provincial income tax cut in the history of the province of Ontario—\$10 billion—and that was accompanied by a \$4.5-billion business tax cut for small businesses. Ninety-three per cent of individual taxpayers in Ontario were enjoying an income tax cut starting on January 1. Ninety thousand individuals in Ontario—low-income Ontarians, including many seniors—were 100% removed from the income tax rolls.

The tax reform package also includes a new sales tax credit of up to \$260 per year for low- and medium-income families and individuals; an additional \$270 per year of Ontario property tax credit; and an additional \$500 per year in the seniors' property tax credit; plus, as we all know, a one-time payment of \$1,000 per family and \$300 per individual.

In addition to the \$4.5-billion tax cut for small business, Ontario businesses will save \$500 million per year in administrative costs.

Stephen Harper, John Baird and Jim Flaherty all voted to implement our HST in Ontario. Indeed, the federal government gave Ontario \$4.2 billion to help implement the HST, and that's because Ontario and Canada both know it will make our manufacturing economy more competitive and create over 600,000 new jobs. Here's what Jim Flaherty, the federal Minister of Finance, said just over seven months ago, and I'm quoting exactly: An HST "is the single most important step that provinces with" a provincial sales tax "could take to stimulate new business investment, create jobs and improve Canada's overall ... competitiveness."

Our tax reform policy is good for Ontarians and it's good for Canada. So are the McGuinty government's energy policies, which are also helping to transform the economy of Ontario.

The end of the Mike Harris administration, in which the current Conservative leader was a leading minister, burdened Ontario with blackouts and brownouts, emergency generators in our cities and electricity reliability at its lowest level in recent history in Ontario, and the opening of our restructured electricity markets was in total disarray.

Between then and now, reliability of electricity supply and infrastructure has been stabilized and upgraded, and Ontario generated more new energy capacity per capita and more new green energy per capita than any other jurisdiction in North America.

Just last week, our government delivered the largest green energy initiative of its kind in Canadian history. Under the Green Energy Act's feed-in tariff program, 184 new contracts for big green energy projects were approved. We previously announced 510 medium-sized projects. This new announcement creates 2,500 megawatts of new generation.

Under the Samsung consortium partnership, Ontario will benefit in a number of ways: from \$7 billion of foreign investment; the building of four major manufacturing plants in Ontario to manufacture green energy products and equipment; the building of new green energy generation facilities; and the creation of over 16,000 green energy jobs.

The McGuinty government has re-established electricity reliability in Ontario, has established Ontario as the new leader in North America for green energy generation, has laid the groundwork for a green energy manufacturing industry and has laid the foundation for 50,000 new knowledge-based green jobs. This is real progress for today and for the future.

In addition to our tax reform package and energy initiatives, we are also leading with our education to build Ontario's economy in the future. Under the Harris/Hudak Tories, we saw: strikes, turmoil, massive budget cuts and ballooning class sizes; under our government: no strikes, reduced class sizes, sustainable budgets for school boards, and optional full-day learning for four- and five-year-old kindergarten. We have been supporting post-secondary education with capital expansion, investments in innovation and research, sustainable budgets, and, of course, we've just announced in our budget more spaces for 20,000 additional students to go to colleges and universities this September, with new annual investment of \$310 million—that's \$310 million per year. We've also announced other significant budget initiatives for our colleges and universities.

We are building better people and a better economy through education. We are preparing Ontario for the smart and green jobs in the smart and green economy of the 21st century.

Our government has been working hard and successfully to build a 21st-century economy. In all that time, we have heard nothing positive from the official opposition. We've heard bleating, shouting and spinning. Everything is negative.

From 1995 to 1997, I occupied an office on the fourth floor in the northeast corner of this legislative building.



That's an office that has had, for the last 100 years or so, ghost sightings—some in recent history. Well, since I returned, there's been a new ghost sighting right here in this chamber. It's the spirit of Mike Harris in the body of Tim Hudak. Last month, the Leader of the Opposition did an interview on Ottawa talk radio. He was asked if the Hudak government would bring back workfare. Here's what he said: "I was part of a government that brought in workfare. I think that made a tremendous amount of sense; I think that is a fair principle we uphold." He went on to say in different ways how our social safety network was too expensive and that we had to cut back on it.

A couple of weeks ago, the Leader of the Opposition announced a 10-point plan for Ontario. The plan, in some respects, is very close to plagiarism—I probably should take that word back—to copying from the Mike Harris Common Sense Revolution, going back to 1995.

In the 10-point plan, the Leader of the Opposition has written, "Cut wasteful government"; the Common Sense Revolution wording was, "Cutting out fat and waste." The Hudak wording: "Bring public sector agreements in line with reality"; the Common Sense Revolution: Reform labour law and "shift power" away "from labour bosses." Again, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Hudak: "Reduce the tax burden on employers"; and the Common Sense Revolution: "Cutting payroll taxes."

The opposition Conservatives have a 1995, hard, right-wing manifesto with the child of Mike Harris; the government of Ontario, the McGuinty government, is implementing a plan to build a smart, green, 21st-century economy for Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I'd like to welcome Mr. Chiarelli back to the legislative chamber, which he left to run for the mayoralty of the city of Ottawa. It's unfortunate that he is continuing to fight Conservatives, whether they're in government or in opposition, as he did as mayor, and continues to do back in the government benches. I believe that we should work co-operatively for the city that we represent and that we should continue to do that regardless of which side of the Legislature we sit on.

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Mr. Chiarelli has talked about the past government of Mr. Harris, of which I was a proud member, when we created over a million jobs for the people of Ontario, whereas this government has created less than 100,000 private sector jobs for the people of Ontario in their seven years here.

We have a lot of history in this place. Mr. Hudak represents the views of many centre-right Conservatives in Ontario who would like to see fiscal prudence and proper management of our taxpayers' dollars as we go forward. Just let the electorate decide in 2011 which they want: a spending Premier like Dalton McGuinty or a Premier like Tim Hudak, who wants to be careful with our taxpayers' dollars and get the most services possible for those taxpayers' dollars.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I'm pleased to join this debate on Bill 16 today. I fully agree with the member from Ottawa West—Nepean that this bill lays the foundation for a strong Ontario workforce, a prosperous economy and a better education system. This bill also opens Ontario to new ideas, new investments and new jobs.

Education is this government's highest priority. As a former teacher, nothing pleases me more than to see education thriving. My parents always told me that it's only through education that families become stronger and more prosperous.

This September, this government is introducing a full-day learning program for our four- and five-year-old children. This will be implemented in 600 schools across Ontario, including three schools in my riding of Mississauga—Brampton South. This will provide a seamless and integrated program for our children, and it will make life easier for parents and learning easier for our children.

Under this budget, our government is investing \$63.5 million to protect child care spaces across Ontario; 542 child care spaces will be protected in the region of Peel. Our government is also investing \$310 million to add new—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The member for Carleton—Mississippi Mills was absolutely right: This member hasn't changed his spots. I know this is his maiden speech, so we're supposed to be nice.

When Ernie Eves left this Legislature in 2001, he took a severance, as was appropriate at that time. He then returned to this Legislature in a by-election the next year—2002, I believe it was—and he returned as leader of our party. He immediately paid back that severance because he didn't feel that he deserved it.

I haven't asked the member whether or not he has paid back his severance or not but, being a Liberal, I can stand here and I can guarantee the people of Ontario that he has not paid back that severance he took.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm pleased to welcome back the member for Ottawa West—Nepean. He was away for a while. He was missed. I congratulate him on giving his non-partisan speech—or at least the beginning of it was non-partisan. The end was not a speech about the budget; the end seemed to be an attack upon the opposition leader. I would hope that we would continue to focus on the issue before us, which is the budget. I would hope that at a time when Ontario has the largest deficit ever in its history, we would focus on the budget; at a time when we have unemployment rates which rival, or are very close to rivalling, what the unemployment rate was in the Great Depression, that we would focus on the budget. At a time when the government plans to introduce a new tax which will take \$7 billion a year out of the pockets of Ontario citizens and hit modest- and middle-income



families hardest, I would hope we would focus on the budget.

These are real issues and they are the issues of real people. I would hope that's what we would focus on. I would hope—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** If Liberal members want to speak, I invite them to get to their feet.

I would hope that we would focus on the fact that there are literally millions of Ontarians who are hurting very badly. In my part of Ontario, you can go virtually to every community and find the community on the verge of shutdown—sawmill town after sawmill town, paper mill town after paper mill town, pulp mill town after pulp mill town. Those are the real issues we should be—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Ottawa West–Nepean has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bob Chiarelli:** I'm very pleased that the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills spoke about co-operation between parties. He made some comments about that; he didn't mention downloading at the time. But in any case, I'm very, very proud of the McGuinty government's collaboration with Conservatives, particularly the federal Conservatives when it comes to the HST, because that was a very collaborative effort. As I mentioned, Stephen Harper, John Baird, Pierre Poilievre, MPs from our community in the Ottawa area all voted with Ontario, and Ontario worked very collaboratively to improve the competitiveness of the Ontario economy. There was a very, very strong endorsement in that quote from Jim Flaherty that we were doing the right thing and we were following his lead.

I also want to say that we are very close in terms of our policies and philosophies with the federal government on reduction of the deficit. There's a sense that we cannot start cutting, burning and slashing at this particular point in time, that we have to keep our economy growing and robust to get it strong and back on its feet again. Once again, the policies, the time periods and the direction of the federal government in terms of its fiscal management are very close to what we're doing here in Ontario.

We are collaborating, we are co-operating and we are moving Ontario in the right direction. About three weeks ago, the Conference Board of Canada issued a report indicating that in Ontario in 2010 we are moving to a growth rate of 3.5%, which is one of the highest that Ontario has experienced in almost a decade, according to that particular Conference Board report. So we are doing the right things. We're building the economy of Ontario—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thanks for including me in today's debate on the 2010 Ontario budget. Madam Chair, as you know, being a member of this distinguished place, as do all of my colleagues, it's always a privilege to have the opportunity to address this distinguished chamber on

the priorities that our constituents have. In Nepean–Carleton, we share many of those with Ontarians.

Former Prime Minister Joe Clark once referred to Canada as a “community of communities.” I can't help but wonder if he coined that phrase when he was thinking about communities such as Nepean–Carleton, which are very large, diverse and built on Matthew 19:19's fundamental premise of “love thy neighbour as thyself.”

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This year I'm particularly pleased to enter the budget debate because it falls so closely on my fourth anniversary as an MPP in this chamber. Furthermore, my maiden speech in this chamber took place almost four years ago to the day, and I spoke, at the same time, about those priorities that my community sent me to Queen's Park on during that 2006 budget debate.

Four years ago and two elections later, I want people in Nepean–Carleton to know that I will continue to bring to this place a desire to protect the values that are shared by the people of North Gower, Manotick, Osgoode, Greely, Riverside South and Barrhaven. Those are the values of safe streets, strong families and self-reliance. People like Nancy Davis, Sue Ayyad, Anna Suzuki, Kim Sheldrick and Kelly Ross have all sent me to Queen's Park to defend our suburban-rural way of life. They expect me to stand up for seniors in our community, who have given us so much, like Ron Shurtliff, Walter Foster, Eldon Brownlee and Arthur Rice. They expect me to stand up for families like Steve and Ann Noonan's, Karla and Doug Clark's, and Richard and Karen Fromm's. And they expect me to stand up for small businesses like the family-run businesses of BarrhavenLive.ca, Randy's Pools and Spas, and Earl Stanley's Maple Lane Farm.

The people of Nepean–Carleton expected that the budget would reflect their values, they expected that their budget would reflect their priorities, and they expected that our province would also defend seniors, families and small business, all of whom contribute to a community that not only cherishes safer streets, strong families and self-reliance, but a community that lives it.

Sadly, the most recent McGuinty Liberal budget does not reflect the values or the priorities of the people of Nepean–Carleton. Please let me explain why.

In my maiden speech to this chamber just four short years ago, I pointed out that D. Aubrey Moodie founded what is today Nepean, and he did it based on family values that were learned on the farm and in the rural communities that surrounded Ottawa, values that we can truly be thankful for today. Self-reliance, hard work and honesty—the archetypical virtues of humanity that when applied to governance made governance work. That spirit still lives today in Nepean–Carleton. It is a community where families still work hard for their community and for each other.

That spirit, however, is threatened by this most recent budget. When government takes away the incentive for hard work and replaces it with high taxes, more regulations and reliance on bureaucracy, our communities suffer.



In Nepean–Carleton, I'm proud of the people who give our community so much so that it remains strong and so that it will continue to grow. People like Joe and Linda Price of PJ Quigley's restaurant make sure that every sports team and church has the opportunity to fundraise. They very much live on their desire and drive to give back to Nepean–Carleton.

It's the same with Andrea Steenbakkers, who works for so many community-led initiatives, such as Barrhaven Run for Roger's House and for the St. Andrew school council, just to name a couple.

Manotick's own Grace Agostinho has been quietly working for years to help build an orphanage in Haiti. She only recently got recognition because of the disaster there. She's supported by legionnaires like Alan Hahn, and Jeff Morris from Barrhaven Independent, the newspaper that people in my community so frequently read. Jeff, of course, is possibly Mr. Community himself, devoting many hours not only to his newspaper but to community events so that we can thrive as a growing community.

Then there are people like Meredith Brophy, Ron Issac, his son Jason Issac, Marlene Casey and Kris Shulz, each giving back to their communities every single day through their numerous activities, whether it's in Manotick or Kars or Metcalfe or Vernon.

They all give back without sweetheart deals or corporate welfare, like what we saw last week with an \$8-billion corporate welfare announcement, the largest in Canadian history, one that will be paid for by these community volunteers through higher hydro bills. So this budget sends them the wrong message.

This government is on the wrong track. It tells the community activists in Nepean–Carleton and right across Ontario that they should rely on government: Leave it to government to do because government can do better than the community. And that's a wrong message. In fact, I prefer what Ronald Reagan said: "The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: 'I'm from the government, and I'm here to help.'"

This budget, for all it claims to support, forgot many segments in society: small business, families and seniors, and it forgot farmers. It forgot the people who built Ontario with their strong work ethic.

I had the privilege last week to meet with a retired cattle farmer, John Newman. Last week we talked a lot about this approach to agriculture. I'm disappointed that the 2010 budget speech mentioned neither agriculture nor the family farm once. A livelihood and way of life for so many in Nepean–Carleton, like Dwight Foster, Peter Ruiter, Brent Taylor and Ed Schouten, it was not even so much as acknowledged by the finance minister in his address, despite this sector's economic significance.

I want to pay tribute to my seatmate, who's actually sitting a little bit further away from me today, our agriculture critic, the member from Oxford, who just two weeks ago in this very chamber suggested that leadership on the agricultural file has now been relegated to the role of the lobbyist. That is not how you support our farmers. It is not how you support our agricultural sector.

The families in Nepean–Carleton were also disappointed with this budget. Parents are justifiably concerned with the state of Ontario's books today and what the most recent tax hikes are going to mean for them and for their children. For example, hard-working and community-minded families like Stef and Melanie Gauthier's or Cheryl and Hugh Cooper's have budgets. They would be shocked at how the Liberal government is mismanaging their tax dollars, especially because they work so hard to pay their taxes, live by the rules and support their neighbours.

And what kind of message is this budget sending to our students, like Ashley Croke or Cassandra Edwards, who have their student loan debt to worry about but now also a very large provincial debt? I'm not sure that any of these people can fathom that Dalton McGuinty has tripled our reliance on federal welfare payments.

There was a time in this province just six short years ago, when Dalton McGuinty came to office, that have-not status and equalization payments coming into the province of Ontario would have been unthinkable.

Dalton McGuinty will also have doubled the debt from the time he took office in 2003 to when he leaves in 2011. That means the household share of the provincial burden and the debt on families like Paul and Krista MacKenzie's Barrhaven family went from \$30,000 in 2003 to \$60,000. Dalton McGuinty has also presided over a deficit which is now larger than all of the other nine provinces combined. Clearly not a priority, Mr. McGuinty proved that the debt and deficit were an afterthought when he relegated them to the second-last page of his budget document.

The families in Kars, Vernon, Metcalfe, Craig Henry and Findlay Creek are getting nothing in return from this government with the exception of a massive \$15-billion health tax; a \$3-billion HST which takes effect on Canada Day; a \$1-billion eHealth boondoggle that saw sweetheart deals to Liberal-friendly firms; and hidden fees and taxes like the eco-tax, the hydro tax which is coming and gosh knows what else. It is getting tougher by the minute to raise a family in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

We are going to reach the tipping point very soon, because enough is enough. I'm fortunate to have a loving family. My husband, Joe, and my daughter, Victoria, mean the world to me. I see our friends with small children, too. They're paying their mortgage, putting gas in the car and food on the table. Hopefully, they have money left over to send their kids to soccer or hockey registration with the Nepean Hotspurs or the Metcalfe Jets, but with Mr. McGuinty's continued taxation it's going to be so tough on those who want to put their kids through sports because, even then, kids' sports registration is going to increase by 8%.

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Take, for example, Janice Crowe of the Nepean Studio School of Dance. She teaches hundreds of kids each year how to dance. Whether they want to express themselves or the parents want to give them the gift to dance, they



will be forced to pay an extra 8% come July 1, 2010. In fact, Janice had to send out an email telling parents to beat the HST by registering early.

Families are working to make ends meet in Ontario, and I can't for the life of me understand why the Liberals have decided to penalize them.

But perhaps the only other group more unfairly targeted than Ontario's families are Ontario's seniors. How Mr. McGuinty thinks Helen Byers, Shirley Mahoney or Helen and Vern Foster can afford to give Mr. McGuinty thousands more dollars in taxes and hidden fees next year, including the new hydro tax, Mr. McGuinty's 11.6% rate increase on hydro and the 8% HST on top of all that, is beyond me.

Because of this budget and Mr. McGuinty's history of massive spending and little regard for restraint, particularly during economic recession, seniors have been unfairly tapped to balance his budget. How much more are seniors living at Robertson House, Thorncliffe Place, Orchard View Living Centre or Prince of Wales Manor expected to take?

These are the people who built this province, who fought for our country. It is unfair that in addition to paying 8% more for a variety of services, he's going to tack on another 8% to their mutual funds, their haircuts and funeral services. With all the extra revenue, Mr. McGuinty is going to reap from seniors, they will still have to contend with a health care system which is short on long-term beds. Last time I checked in the city of Ottawa alone, that is 250 beds.

Nepean-Carleton businesses have not escaped the wrath of the Dalton McGuinty tax-and-spend budget either. Today, they're grappling with the third hike to the minimum wage in three years, and that is tough on business owners like Ken and Kelly Ross of Ross' Independent, who, like so many, give so much more back to the community than they will ever get. Realtors like Betty Hillier or health care professionals like Victoria Clark and Salima Ismail have not been spared. The dreaded HST is going to affect them, too. Mr. and Mrs. Lee, Korean immigrants to Canada, have worked so hard to build their Brown's dry cleaning business in Barrhaven. On July 1, dry cleaning bills will go up by another 8%, and that's going to affect their bottom line. It's simply not fair for these new Canadians.

At a recent Barrhaven Business Exchange breakfast, I was told time and again by local business owners that the HST is going to hurt, not help them. You just have to ask John Herbert of the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association about how the HST is going to impact the home renovation sector. An often-quoted statistic of what happened in Nova Scotia is that one third of the renovation sector stayed in business, one third went out of business and one third went underground.

The attacks on small business have me so concerned that the project to revitalize Bells Corners will be in danger if this government doesn't get back on track. After all, Ontario relies on a strong small business sector to create jobs. With increased regulatory and taxation burdens, the job creation climate has them stifled.

This budget has lost credibility with everyday Ontarians. Amid the wasted money, the billions of dollars at eHealth, OLG, WSIB, Cancer Care Ontario and the LHINs—our local health integration networks—Ontarians cannot for the life of them understand why they should pay more but continue to receive less.

I've heard dozens of my constituents who are fed up with the \$100,000 sunshine list. Last week, it was revealed that there are 10,000 more people making over \$100,000 in Ontario's public service than there were last year.

Small business owners like Thom Bennett of Bennett Insurance, Michele Brydges of Act II consignment and Ozzie and Caroline Rossi of La Porto a Casa work darn hard to make their businesses viable, to employ staff and to pay their taxes, all before taking home a paycheque. Under the McGuinty Liberals, however, Ontario's private sector is being outpaced by the public sector, and it is not sustainable. But that's no surprise: Dalton McGuinty has tripled the number of people making over \$100,000 in the public service since he took office.

I'm not sure that there is a person in the Bells Corners, Osgoode, South Carleton, Greely or Barrhaven legions who can understand why precious health care dollars are being spent on bloated bureaucracies at the LHINs, which have seen the amount of people making over \$100,000 in their ranks triple in three short years.

I know Ontarians can't understand how Dalton McGuinty can justify paying a \$25-million severance to people who are not losing their jobs. That's why PC leader Tim Hudak is calling on the McGuinty Liberals to support his budget amendment, which would redefine who is entitled to severance and who is not. We believe that if you do not lose your job or miss a day of work, you do not receive severance.

It's also why PC leader Tim Hudak has offered 10 ideas that Mr. McGuinty could have adopted to get Ontarians working again. His solutions can be found at 10for2010.ca. They include suspension of the tax on new jobs, eliminating job-killing red tape and regulations, making home ownership more affordable, restoring the balance on the WSIB system, expanding job opportunities for young workers, creating jobs in northern Ontario, cutting wasteful government, stopping corporate welfare, capping spending and bringing public sector agreements in line with reality. Ontario can lead again, and the people of Nepean-Carleton like Bill Tupper, Gib Patterson and Norm MacDonald deserve no less.

I conclude with an observation that I made four years ago in my maiden speech: "Whether you are a farmer in Nepean-Carleton or live in the GTA or northern Ontario, you should be able to expect that the government will work for you and will treat you equally and with respect, but clearly it is not the case under this current government."

It is clear that with the runaway spending, waste and mismanagement of this government and the lack of priorities in this budget, the McGuinty Liberals have become disconnected with the people whom they have



been sent here to represent. Based on this 2010 Liberal budget, there is a major disconnect with the people in Nepean–Carleton, who value safe streets, strong families and self-reliance, because this budget attacks those very same things. They have mortgaged not only our future, but they have mortgaged our children's.

"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today," President Abraham Lincoln once said, but this is exactly what Mr. McGuinty has attempted to do. As a result, I will be casting my vote against the 2010 Liberal budget, its deficit, its debt and its runaway spending.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened attentively to my Conservative colleague from Ottawa—there seem to be a lot of Ottawa speakers here today. I'm not sure how this happens on a particular day, but there seems to be some competition amongst them.

I want to acknowledge that she correctly describes how much the HST is going to hurt modest- and middle-income families. The fact of the matter is that this is a tax on just about everything. If you get a haircut, there's a tax; you take your pet to the vet, there's a tax; you go to see a movie, there's a tax; you take a taxi cab, there's a tax; your car breaks down on the highway and you have to have it towed to the garage, there's a tax; a loved one in your family passes away and there's a funeral, there's a tax. The list goes on.

I think members of the McGuinty government need to stop and reflect for a while on what is happening out there. Across this province, there are more and more people who have less income now than they had four or five years ago. Go to Windsor: All kinds of people have less income now than they had four or five years ago—or Sarnia, or Chatham, or St. Thomas, or London, or Brantford, or Cambridge, or Kitchener-Waterloo, or Hamilton, or the Niagara peninsula, or Oshawa, or Peterborough, or anywhere across the north, or Cornwall, and you will find a great number of people who have less income now than they had four or five years ago. Yet the plan of the McGuinty Liberals is to increase the taxes on people who have less income now than they had four or five years ago. I think this government needs to reflect on what that is going to do to people's prospects.

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**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak to the comments made by my colleague from Nepean–Carleton. Here's another Ottawa member speaking.

I don't understand where the member from Nepean–Carleton is coming from in terms of the very strong economic policies this government is putting forward to ensure that we grow our economy as we recover from a very devastating global recession. This is a recession which has not impacted just Ontario; it has impacted all of Canada, every single province in this great country of ours, but also across the world.

When it came down to cutting personal income taxes for Ontarians, this member and her party voted against it. When it came down to cutting business taxes for our small businesses, the same businesses she's speaking of, when it came down to cutting those small business taxes significantly, this member and her party voted against it. It's the same thing with the harmonization of the GST and PST, which will create more jobs for our economy: This party refused to be in favour of it, this party whose federal cousins are for it and have passed it in the federal House of Commons. They voted against it because they are being duplicitous toward Ontarian people—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask you to withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I withdraw—taking a different position than they have taken in the past.

Just right now there's a report that has been filed by Canadian Press which is reporting that Ontario's GDP is the best in Canada and the United States. Ontario, in terms of economic growth, is leading in North America. Why? Because we have the right set of economic policies in place, through this budget, through the Open Ontario plan, we are asking, we are urging all the members of this Legislature to be a part in this as we grow this economy.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I understand why the member from Ottawa Centre doesn't understand where the member from Nepean–Carleton is coming from, because he doesn't understand, the McGuinty government doesn't understand and he as president of the Ontario Liberal Party does not understand what fiscal prudence is about. This government has led in creating debt, in creating an enormous, enormous negative for our future kids and grandkids. They've doubled the long-term debt for each kid, each person, each child in our province over a short seven- or eight-year period.

About two or three years ago I asked Premier McGuinty a question. I said, "Premier McGuinty, you have a surplus of \$5.5 billion in your budget. Why don't you pay down the long-term debt now so that when we have a rainy day you'll have some money to spend?" Do you know what his answer was? "Of the \$5.5 billion, we're going to use \$.5 billion, or \$500 million, to pay down the debt and we're going to throw the rest out across the province and create things like the transit fund of \$750 million for the Toronto area," which hasn't been spent yet. When they had the money, they could have saved and they could have knocked down the debt so that when we're in a rainy day now, they could have spent the money without increasing the long-term debt. They didn't take the advantage. In other words, "You got the money, spend it. When you get into trouble, borrow, borrow, borrow." This government doesn't understand—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I was pleased to be able to listen carefully to the comments by the member for Nepean–Carleton, and I'm astounded and quite frankly shaken—



not to say taken aback—by the critique of her by other members of this assembly.

She's talking about the sort of things that folks are talking about down where I come from. She's talking about seniors and other folks who wish they could be hard-working, were hard-working until they lost their job, and in the case of seniors who simply can't afford to retire—because if they had a pension plan, it's been gutted, and if it hasn't been gutted, the value of the defined benefit portion of it hasn't risen over the course of the months and years to the point where they can maintain that standard of living that they expected and they worked so hard for.

Look, down where I come from, people are very, very frightened about the impact of the HST on their day-to-day lives: on their welfare; on their ability to help their grandkids, struggling with ever-growing college and university tuitions; on their ability to remain mobile in the community; on their ability to, dare I say it, maybe take two or three weeks in the peak of wintertime to take a vacation to warmer parts of the world. People are going to be impacted significantly. People's lifestyles are going to change significantly. At the end of the day, people are going to have less in their pocket to spend at their corner store, to spend in their local merchant stores, to buy the things that, well, their neighbours probably don't make anymore because Mr. McGuinty and his Liberal team have allowed this province to be gutted of its manufacturing sector. Those wealth-creating value-added manufacturing jobs are gone, gone, gone.

I'm looking forward to Howard Hampton, member for Kenora—Rainy River, who's going to be speaking to this motion next. You know that he's going to bring a unique northern perspective, so if folks share that excitement, they should stay tuned for Howard—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Nepean—Carleton has up to two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I want to say thank you to my colleagues: my neighbour from Carleton—Mississippi Mills, my colleague from Welland and my colleague from Ottawa Centre.

Look, this speech meant a lot to me, and it did because I took a long time to speak to my constituents, who feel that they are being unfairly treated by this Liberal budget. I felt it important to do what I promised them on day one in this chamber, which was to communicate their views effectively and forcefully from my seat in the chamber, which I have.

What I'm trying to convey to the government is that people in my riding, and I believe throughout the rest of the province, feel that you have been disconnected from the people who sent you there. That's disturbing; it's troubling. They only have to start to listen to them again. This happens from time to time in election cycles: You see governments come; they go. The reality is, they're here to represent people, and the people across the province—I am speaking particularly for the people of Nepean—Carleton—are having difficult days. They can't

afford new taxes, they can't afford new hidden fees, and they get extremely frustrated and angry when they hear about waste and mismanagement, whether that's at OLG, at eHealth or, now, their local health integration networks.

By not doing what the member from Carleton—Mississippi Mills said, which is start to pay down that debt, they have done exactly what Abraham Lincoln told us not to do, which is, you cannot escape responsibility for tomorrow by evading it today—which is what this government has done consistently over the past six years, which it has done again through this 2010 budget.

I stand in good conscience, knowing that when I vote against this budget bill, I am doing so because the people of my riding expect better of their government, they expected better of this budget, and I know that in speaking for them, I'm doing just that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm pleased, on behalf of New Democrats, to have an opportunity to engage in this budget debate. Let me get right to the first point I want to make.

The reality in Ontario today is that more people are falling into poverty. The reality is, those people who are dealing with poverty are, in fact, dealing with a heavier burden and tougher circumstances than ever before.

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Let me just give you some examples, examples that are too close to home for me.

Start, for example, in Chapleau. Chapleau used to be a town that had three sawmills. Today you might find one. Literally hundreds of jobs have been lost, in a small community like that.

Then you go over to Sault Ste. Marie, where just two weeks ago St. Marys announced they were shutting down the paper mill, putting another 400 workers out of work in the mill, and likely another 400 out of work in the forest and in transportation.

Wawa: The oriented strand board mill has shut down. Dubreuilville: The sawmill has shut down. Hornepayne: The sawmill has shut down. White River: The sawmill has shut down. Longlac: The sawmill, the particleboard mill and the waferboard mill are shut down. Nakina: The sawmill is shut down. Marathon: The pulp mill is shut down. Terrace Bay: Both pulp mills are shut down. Red Rock: The containerboard mill is shut down. Nipigon: The plywood mill is shut down. Thunder Bay has lost over 10 paper machines, and three sawmills have shut down. Ignace: sawmill shut down. Atikokan: sawmill shut down. Sioux Lookout: sawmill shut down. Dryden: sawmill and two paper machines shut down. Ear Falls: sawmill shut down. Kenora: paper mill gone; sawmill shut down.

This represents tens of thousands of good jobs that are gone; people who have exhausted their employment insurance; people who are now either in the situation of exhausting their life savings or having to rely upon Ontario Works.



More and more people are falling into poverty in this province, so it was with some interest that I read the throne speech—and not one mention of poverty; not one mention of how to help these people who are now struggling with very low incomes. It was as if, for the McGuinty Liberals, poverty doesn't exist. I know this is a government that talks a good line about having targets, and it talks a good line about having consultation. Many of these people have been unemployed now for four years. The employment insurance is gone. The life savings are gone. In many cases, they would sell their home if they could get anything for it, all to put food on the table, pay the heating bill, pay the hydro bill.

I looked for something in this budget that said this government is going to do something. This budget doesn't even mention the word "poverty." It's as if it doesn't exist in the dictionary of the McGuinty Liberals. You don't even mention people who are poor, people who are struggling on low incomes. It's as if, for the McGuinty Liberals, these folks don't exist.

At a time when there are more people unemployed, more people who are trying to live on lower incomes and more people who do not have any employment income, it is nothing less than a travesty for a government to come forward with a budget like this.

What's equally incredible is that this government is about to put on the people of Ontario the largest single tax increase in the history of the province. At a time when more people have less money, you're going to see the largest single tax increase in the history of the province.

I want to deal with that from the perspective of one group of people, because once again they've been largely left out of this budget in terms of the government's consideration. I'm talking about the First Nations of Ontario. The implementation of the HST is going to have a substantial negative effect on First Nations people, because the HST does away with the point-of-sale exemption for First Nations.

Under the provincial sales tax, a native person going to the store in Thunder Bay or the store in Kenora or Sioux Lookout or Red Lake or Longlac or Geraldton or Nakina and shopping to get the winter coat and the winter boots would be able to present their status card at the cash register and they were tax-exempt from the PST. Under the HST, First Nations will no longer be tax-exempt.

Why is this a problem? Because by any income survey that is ever taken of Ontario, who, as an identifiable group, is always at the bottom in terms of their income? Native people. First Nations have the lowest incomes, and yet with one single stroke, this government is going to subject very low-income First Nations people to the biggest tax increases ever in their lives.

Let me give you an example of just what's going to happen here. Gasoline: A native person goes to the service station in Dryden and they fill up their tank—boom, 13%. If you thought gas was going to be \$1 a litre, when you add on the HST, it's \$1.13 a litre. That's a significant tax increase.

If someone, as I said, buys a pair of winter boots—and for northern First Nations, you better have a pair of winter boots—there's no point-of-sale exemption. If the price says \$40, then it's \$40 plus 13%.

A lot of native people do not have cars. To get to medical appointments, to get to where they need to go, they need to take taxis. If you have a \$50 taxi charge, that's now \$56.50. The HST applies to taking a taxi.

For a lot of First Nations in my part of the world, if they need to get to Winnipeg, if they need to get to Thunder Bay, they take the bus. If the bus ticket is \$100, it's now \$113. The HST applies.

A lot of native people have older vehicles. Older vehicles, I know because I have one, are prone to breakdowns. If it breaks down on the side of the highway and you have to have it towed to the garage at a \$200 towing charge, it's \$226 now.

The list goes on and on and on. This is going to be a substantial tax increase for First Nations.

I know there's a bit of Ping-Pong between the McGuinty Liberals and the Harper Conservatives in Ottawa. The McGuinty Liberals say, "Well, you could apply to the federal government to get the tax refunded." First Nations know that you don't get a tax refund. The rule for a tax refund runs relatively like this: You have to prove you live on the First Nation and you have to prove that the goods purchased were delivered to the First Nation. But if a native person goes from Wabigoon Lake First Nation to Dryden to buy a winter jacket and a pair of boots and the price comes to \$200—in other words, \$226 with the HST—you put the boots on, you put the coat on and you go home. You don't have, in paper terms, proof that it was delivered to the First Nation. You can't get the rebate.

The taxi: How do you prove that the taxi took you from Dryden to Wabigoon Lake First Nation? But the service is still going to be taxed. You don't get a tax rebate, and you don't get a tax rebate for the car that breaks down on the side of the road.

It's obvious, when you go through the list of all the items that are now going to be taxed, and for which now, under the HST, First Nations will be taxed—domestic air, rail and commercial bus tickets; campgrounds; overnight summer camps; hotels; ice rink rentals; motor vehicle services, like towing your car or having your car washed; labour costs related to home renovations; funeral costs; carpet costs; dry cleaning; if you go to a conference or a seminar; if you go to a movie theatre; if you use a taxi; if you buy postage stamps—my God, if you buy vitamins.

A lot of the First Nations communities in my constituency and across northern Ontario deal every day with issues of lack of appropriate nourishment and nutrition. The public health nurse tells everyone, "Buy vitamins." But under the McGuinty Liberals' plan, as soon as you buy vitamins, you're taxed—vitamins.

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Professional fees: If you're a First Nation person and you have to hire a lawyer—that's not unusual in Ontario.



Disproportionately we charge, convict and imprison First Nations, so you have to get a lawyer. HST applies. You get a haircut: HST applies. You have a pet, you take the pet to the veterinarian: HST applies. Adult footwear; if you use the Internet: HST applies. This is going to be a substantial and huge tax increase for native people, for First Nations.

What First Nations are asking is simply, "Look, can't you continue the point-of-sale exemption?" The response from this government is, "Go talk to the federal government." It's the McGuinty government that's implementing this. It is the McGuinty government that brought legislation before the Ontario Legislature to implement the HST and to take away the point-of-sale exemptions from First Nations. So why doesn't the McGuinty government do something about it?

In fact, you know what I find intriguing? The McGuinty government had no trouble exempting homes that sell for \$400,000 or less. It sounds to me like the McGuinty Liberals were worried about what would happen to their voting prospects in and around Toronto, where a lot of homes sell for \$400,000. The McGuinty Liberals had no trouble exempting homes for \$400,000 or less in Toronto and in the greater Toronto area. When there was public concern raised about the Tim Hortons coffee and a muffin, the McGuinty Liberals had no trouble exempting that from the HST. Then I read today that the government is going to introduce legislation that will give renters an HST break.

If the McGuinty government, in one way or another, can negotiate exemptions for homes that cost up to \$400,000, and the McGuinty government can implement exemptions from the HST for the Tim Hortons coffee and doughnut or coffee and muffin, and the McGuinty Liberals can provide HST breaks for renters, why can't the McGuinty government continue the HST exemption for First Nations, identified as one of the lowest-income groups in the province of Ontario?

Let me offer what I think the reason is. The reason is, the McGuinty Liberals care about voters in the suburban and urban Toronto area and the \$400,000 homes that they might buy. The McGuinty Liberals care about those people who go to Tim Hortons or Coffee Time and buy the coffee and doughnut or the muffin and coffee. The McGuinty Liberals have suddenly figured out that if renters get a raw deal from the HST, that's going to come back to bite them in terms of lost votes. But in terms of aboriginal people who are, by and large, struggling on low incomes, the McGuinty Liberals don't care so much, don't care enough to continue the point-of-sale exemption from this sales tax.

I'm astounded. This is a government that says it wants and it has a new and better relationship with First Nations. There was no dialogue, no discussion, no negotiation, no consultation whatsoever with First Nations on this. The McGuinty Liberals simply went in the backroom with the Harper Conservatives and signed the deal which dramatically increases taxes on native people, on First Nations, and does away with the point-of-sale

sales tax exemption, with no consideration that this is going to substantially increase taxes for people who probably have the least ability to pay more taxes, the least disposable income to be able to afford to pay more taxes. I'm astounded at the silence in terms of members of the McGuinty Liberal government on this issue.

I spoke earlier about the fact that the word "poverty" is not even mentioned in the budget, despite the fact that more people are living in poverty in Ontario than ever before. It's as if the McGuinty Liberals are hoping that the very negative impact of this huge tax increase on native people will somehow be ignored, will somehow be flushed into the background. I don't think you can substantially increase taxes on people who have some of the lowest incomes in Ontario and pretend that that isn't going to matter, pretend that it isn't going to hurt.

The fact of the matter is—and you can go to almost any First Nation community across this province—First Nations are having a hard time paying their hydro bills as it is, having a hard time paying the heating bill as it is, having a hard time paying the food bill as it is. In most First Nations, the First Nation band council has to get involved with emergency funds because so many families are having their hydroelectricity disconnected. Now the McGuinty government wants to come along and add substantial new fees and taxes and pretend that this isn't going to hurt. But I think what really rubs salt in the wound for First Nations is the fact that a government that claims to want to have a better and more positive relationship with First Nations would do this in the backroom with no dialogue, no discussion, no negotiation, no consultation with First Nation leaderships whatsoever.

And the government that is going to do away with the point-of-sale exemptions for First Nations because it's not important to the government, that same government, is going to exempt homes that cost \$400,000 or less; that same government is going to spend money to exempt the cup of coffee and the muffin or the cup of coffee and the doughnut at Tim Hortons; that same government is going to put in place measures to lessen the burden of the HST on renters. But that same government says, "No. No possibility of continuing the point-of-sale exemption for First Nations." I think that's what really, really goes beyond the pale.

There is still time. This legislative change that was apparently just leaked yesterday, "Renters to Get HST Break": What this says to me is that there is still time for the McGuinty Liberals to reconsider the error they are making here. There is time between now—early April—and July 1 for this government to go back and reconsider their decision to do away with the point-of-sale exemption for First Nations, and I'm asking the McGuinty Liberals to do that. If you can exempt the coffee and the doughnut at Tim Hortons or Coffee Time, if you can exempt homes that cost up to \$400,000 from the HST, if you can put in place legislation to lessen the burden of the HST on renters generally, then I think it's only right and proper that you continue the point-of-sale exemption. Otherwise, First Nations in this province and First Nation



families are going to get whacked and hurt like nothing we've ever seen before. People who struggle now to keep their hydroelectricity connected, to pay their heating bill and put food on the table, will not be able to under the regime that you intend to implement.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm pleased to be able to provide a brief comment on the speech by the member from Kenora—Rainy River.

The budget, certainly in part, has focused and continues, through our economic plan, to focus on those in the province of modest and lower incomes, and those include people throughout the province.

1540

Let me speak here to some of the things both in the budget and as part of the comprehensive tax package that we have put in place as of January 1 of this year. We saw a decrease in the personal income tax for about 93% of Ontarians. There will be, with the implementation of the HST, a one-time rebate—one-time transitional payments for individuals and families, up to \$1,000 for families, income-based, at a fairly high threshold.

There will also be continuing payments of up to \$260 per person—not just per family, but per person—on an annual basis to offset some of the impacts of the tax shifting that will occur with a different type of a tax structure, a consumer tax based more on the HST than on some elements currently of the PST, where there are services that are being added for the purposes of that tax restructuring in the province.

We recognize that certainly children in the province—and part of our poverty reduction strategy—we need to continue to address that matter even in a modest way with the current economic climate that we have. As part of that overall structure, we are picking up some \$63.5 million—thereabouts—of what had been federal money, which is no longer available, to put into child care to maintain the child care capacity and the support that exists in the province for that purpose.

As well, ODSP and Ontario Works, even in the economic climate, have been increased again this year by one percentage point. Apart from the direct budgetary implications, certainly the increase has been called for in the past by the third increase in the minimum wage. We saw just two weeks ago the final instalment of that: some additional 75 cents.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The member for Kenora—Rainy River has offered the House a strong account of what he's hearing in his riding and in his travels throughout Ontario. While our caucus often diverges in opinion from the New Democrats, I think he has offered a very interesting perspective. As you know, this budget debate allows considerable latitude, and a lot of issues are discussed during the course of the debate on the budget motion.

I want to bring forward my concerns about the war on pharmacy that the Minister of Health declared on

pharmacists across the province last week. I have heard from a considerable number of pharmacists in my riding who are very concerned about what this will mean for their patients. Certainly, I heard from Joe Walsh of Walsh's Pharmacy in Arthur. He sent me an email—he actually addressed it to the minister—today on April 12. I'm glad the minister is in the House to hear this. He said that “the face of pharmacy will be changed forever” if these proposals go through. “Longer waits, service cuts, and store closures are imminent, all brought upon by your ministry!”

“You are giving pharmacies monies back i.e. MedsCheck, this program is a farce! I spend 1.5 hours on a MedsCheck review for a patient with 10 meds and you give me \$50. This is less than it would cost you to have your car fixed. Shame on you, Ontarians' health is worth more than fixing their car! What about the \$100 million proposed to be given back to pharmacy? I will max out at \$25,000 for my store and lose \$264,000—you do the math (or have one of your misinformed consultants do it).”

He goes on and on. I've known Joe Walsh all my life, and I believe that what he is telling me is absolutely true. I'm very, very concerned. I share the concern of the small-town pharmacies and certainly of many of the pharmacists across the province. This government has declared war on them. They're going to respond the only way they can: with facts and with arguments. And this side of the House will support them.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** As I told folks before he began speaking, the member for Kenora—Rainy River, Mr. Hampton, has, of course, done an effective and thorough analysis of this government's plan to bilk Ontarians out of yet more tax dollars and the disastrous impact it's going to have on native communities, aboriginal communities, already hard hit by a history of denial and isolation and hard-pressed to concede that they were ever consulted, even when it's a constitutional requirement that they be consulted. Now with an HST that's going to create even greater obstacles for women, men and kids in those aboriginal communities, I say this to the government: Rather than attacking the member for Kenora—Rainy River for bringing this message to Queen's Park, perhaps the government would be better advised to listen carefully and review its ill-conceived commitment to the HST and the tremendous new tax burden that it's going to create for Ontarians from all walks of life, from every part of this province and at every age level.

Let's make this very, very clear: The goal, the end-game here, is all about increasing revenue. So at the same time as Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals cut huge tax breaks for wealthy and very prosperous banks, they imposed new tax hikes on some of the most vulnerable and the people least capable of paying them. That's not the kind of province that most of us want to live in.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?



**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to rise in this House and to speak about the budget motion. I listened to the speakers previous to myself, and when they talk about the tax increase, I'm rather surprised, because the numbers in the budget speak for themselves.

One of the elements of this budget, which is actually based on our five-year Open Ontario plan, is based on reformation of our tax system. Based on this reformation of our tax system, 93% of Ontarians are going to pay fewer taxes than before; there will be over \$15 billion in tax cuts for corporations, businesses and individuals; and 90,000 Ontarians are going to be removed from the tax roll. The numbers are there. I'm rather surprised when my colleagues from the opposite side are talking about tax increases. This is absolute nonsense; there is no such thing. The numbers speak for themselves.

Based on this budget, we will be creating 600,000 new jobs. We are eliminating the embedded tax, which will cause a reduction in the price of goods and services in Ontario. This tax reformation is going to attract \$47 billion in new investments to Ontario.

We've already seen the \$7 billion in new investment that came from Samsung corporation. This \$7-billion investment that came to Ontario could have gone to other provinces or other countries. Why did Samsung bring \$7 billion of its own money and invest in Ontario? Because we are going to create such an environment for businesses to grow, to profit in this province, and to create jobs for Ontarians.

This tax reform and also the budget is the one good for—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Kenora–Rainy River has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm intrigued. I spent a large part of my speech raising the issue of what is going to happen to First Nations, and not one government member responded to that. I suspect, once again, that the reason for that is, this is a government that hopes that they can just hide what's about to happen here behind the radar screen: that an identifiable group that has, in all income surveys, some of the lowest incomes in Ontario, is going to be hit the hardest by the HST. No one on the government side has the courage to stand up and defend what the government is doing here.

To respond to one government member who actually did try to respond to my comments about the fact that the word "poverty" isn't even mentioned in the budget, I would just say to the member that a 1% increase for ODSP and Ontario Works is not even going to keep up with the increases in the hydro bill. It's certainly not, for an urban area such as the one you reside in, going to keep up with, for example, the increases in TTC or the increases in heating costs. In effect, this meagre 1% increase in ODSP and Ontario Works benefits simply illustrates that those people are going to be living in more difficult circumstances than ever before. Their poverty is going to deepen and not be alleviated. Similarly with the increase in the minimum wage: Yes, an increase in the

minimum wage is welcome, but it will continue to be a minimum wage that leaves people below the poverty line.

That's the point here. There was nothing in this budget that's going to do anything significant for those people who are struggling on low—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate.

1550

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I appreciate having the time this afternoon to speak for about 20 minutes on our budget that was delivered here in the Legislature on March 25. I'm very pleased to have this opportunity because, by anybody's definition, certainly by mine and I think by most people in northern Ontario who have had an opportunity to speak with me about it, those people I've had an opportunity to speak to, either through the media or individually or in small groups, what we have managed to bring forward in our budget—I'll speak a bit parochially this afternoon as a member of the northern caucus and the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan. This budget was truly and significantly a budget that favours northern Ontario. As the chair of the northern caucus, I'm very excited and very pleased by what we've managed to deliver on behalf of people living in northern Ontario, and I'm going to spend most of my time this afternoon speaking about items specific to northern Ontario.

The first piece that I wanted to make reference to is a piece that I know many people were very excited to see us having committed to in the longer term, and that is our energy subsidy plan that we have brought forward that is going to be in position now for all large industrials in the province of Ontario. Previously, up until this point, our energy assistance plans that we brought forward over the course of the last several years have been available only to wood product industries. This new rate will now be available to all large industrials, and that will include the steel mills, mining companies and the forest companies in the province of Ontario.

This energy rate subsidy is valued at approximately \$150 million per year for three years. It will take what is currently an 18-cents-per-kilowatt-hour subsidy up to a 20-cents-per-kilowatt-hour subsidy. Just to translate that, that's a \$20-per-megawatt-hour reduction in the price of energy that these large industrials will have to pay. That will translate into approximately a 25% reduction for some of them in terms of their energy costs in the province of Ontario. By any measure, this is an extremely significant announcement for the people of northern Ontario, and I was very thrilled when our government made it.

What I do want to spend a little bit of time talking about, however, is the characterization of this energy rate plan as being too little, too late, and of course where that has predictably come from is the NDP. Still, for me, I must say, it was a little sad, even though predictable—very predictable—to hear the same old, same old coming from the New Democratic Party. Too little, too late, as if to imply to the people of northern Ontario that this is the first time we have brought energy assistance, or assist-



ance generally, to the wood products industry in northern Ontario. That's the implication when they say it's too little, too late. They want the people in northern Ontario—in Thunder Bay and all those communities that we heard rhymed off a little while ago—to think and believe that this budget is the first time that we've brought assistance to that sector. Of course, that is complete nonsense.

There has been energy rate assistance applied to our forestry companies for several years—three or four years. But it is not the only form that our assistance to energy companies comes in. It is not the only form. Besides energy rate assistance for our forestry companies in northern Ontario, we've been providing assistance to them in a variety of other ways. Over the course of the last four years, in addition to energy rate assistance, we've provided other programs that provided significant support for forestry companies in northern Ontario. For example, our roads program, when first introduced, was valued at \$225 million over three years: \$75 million a year. We've extended that for two years more since that original three-year program lapsed. It's important for me to remind people in northern Ontario—it's important for me to remind people in Thunder Bay—that that roads program used to be the purview of the province of Ontario until it was downloaded onto the backs of the forestry companies in the early 1990s by the New Democratic Party. They did that. From about 1993 to about 2005 or 2006, when we brought it back, I have no idea how many tens of millions that cost the forestry companies, but it did cost them a lot of money. We've had that roads program in place for several years in addition to energy rate assistance programs.

We've provided stumpage relief on a variety of species to forestry companies in northern Ontario for a number of years. We have been providing, for forestry companies, significant tax relief. The HST is one tax you're not going hear the forestry companies complaining about, or the corporate income tax reductions in place, or the elimination of the capital tax, or the significant reductions in business education tax rates that were left disproportionately in place by the Conservatives when they took over responsibility for it in 1997 or 1998. All of that combined, along with stumpage relief, with a roads program, with previous energy assistance, is a significant package of supports for forestry companies over the last number of years.

The previous speaker, who had 20 minutes, rhymed off a long litany of communities in Ontario, primarily in northern Ontario, that have seen pulp and paper mills and sawmills close. And he's right: They have closed; what he's wrong about is why they've closed. But he doesn't tell you the other half of the story. He doesn't tell you why they've closed and he doesn't tell you, if you wanted to give the people of Ontario a further geography lesson, that if he knew his geography in British Columbia and in Quebec, he could probably provide for the people of Ontario, if he so chose, the same litany of communities where pulp and paper mills and sawmills have been

closing by the dozens in those provinces as well. Unfortunately, that's not the message the NDP wants to communicate. They want the people of northwestern Ontario or of northern Ontario to think that the forestry crisis only hit there. They don't want them to believe that this transformational change in this industry occurred anywhere else. They don't want them to know that.

We could list off dozens of communities in British Columbia and dozens of communities in Quebec, both jurisdictions of which have seen more mills close and more job losses for men and women than in Ontario. And guess what: British Columbia and Quebec have lower energy costs than we do in Ontario. They always have and they likely always will. Yet in those jurisdictions, there's significant job loss.

In the last six or eight years over 200 mills, pulp and paper and sawmills, have closed in this country alone. I suppose somehow Dalton McGuinty and the provincial Liberals in Ontario are responsible for those mill closures as well. Or maybe there are other reasons for it occurring; maybe something else has happened that has caused the transformation in this industry and the significant job loss.

I know these people who work in these mills and sawmills. They're my friends. I grew up with them. I was in a union hall with many of them. I coached their kids in school. I went through high school with them. I coached their kids in sports. I understand very personally what's going on in those families. I think it's important that we convey to those people exactly what it is that has gone on in this industry.

Why doesn't the member from Kenora—Rainy River ever talk about the appreciation in the value of the Canadian dollar? AbitibiBowater in Thunder Bay: In one pulp and paper mill, a one-cent appreciation in the value of the dollar represents approximately a \$3-million to \$4-million expense to their bottom line—one penny. When we came into government in 2003, the Canadian dollar was about 73 or 75 cents. It topped out some time ago at \$1.10; today it's at about a dollar, almost on par with the American dollar. So 75 cents to a dollar, 25 cents times \$3 million or \$4 million: about \$100 million on one mill's bottom line every year—one mill. Corporately in Ontario for AbitibiBowater you extrapolate that out and that one cent comes out to about \$12 million to \$15 million, for one penny on their bottom line, depending on who you want to talk to. And yet the NDP will continue to say, as they have for the last five or six years, that somehow the catastrophe that has hit this industry is the responsibility of provincial Liberals in the province of Ontario. They'll continue to sing from the same song sheet because they know no other.

I also want to draw a distinction for people when we talk about the forest products industry in any province. When they continue to attach the cost of energy to the job losses that have occurred in the wood products industry, there is a significant energy cost in part of it—the pulp and paper side—and only if they use a process that's called TMP, or thermal mechanical pulping, and we have



provided assistance there. But in the sawmilling industry, where there have been significant job losses all across Ontario, in British Columbia, in Quebec, in the United States, electricity pricing is hardly even mentioned or on the table as a significant contributor to the bottom-line costs of those operating sawmills. It's not a significant factor when it comes to the cost of operating a sawmill. So all of those job losses that have occurred in sawmills over the last six, eight or 10 years are not connected to energy pricing in any way, shape or form. You won't hear the large sawmill guys talking about it. If you want to offer them energy rate relief, of course they'll say yes; they'll step up to the front of the line. Who wouldn't take it lower if they could get it lower? But to suggest that energy pricing has something to do with the closures of sawmills is absolutely incredible. They are very different.

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Nobody wants to talk about the decline of newsprint, because they know that the demand for that particular product has shrunk in some quarters by as much as 50%. Companies have merged so they could take commodity out of the market and try to prop up the commodity price of newsprint, because there is not as significant a demand for the product as there used to be five or 10 years ago. That demand is not likely to come back, although I do hear from some that it's possible they could start identifying new export markets overseas. I'm not sure, but some people say that there is some hope for that there.

But at this point, newsprint demand and the appreciation of the Canadian dollar, not to mention a pretty significant credit crisis—one in my riding that's in CCAA in the United States has a \$6.2-billion debt. I'm not sure how that happened. Somehow that was our fault too. But they have a \$6.2-billion debt, and when the credit crisis hit in the United States, well, guess what? The banks called in their loans. That's \$6.2 billion, which is not an insignificant amount.

The second part of the budget that was significant for northerners—and again, I'm very proud, as chair of the northern caucus, that we were able to achieve this and see this included within our budget—is our northern energy tax credit, a permanent tax credit available only to northerners. I'll start by saying that this is permanent. It is there, and it will benefit only northerners. It is up to \$130 for singles and up to \$200 for families, and it is income-tested as well. I think the \$130-for-singles credit starts at about \$35,000 and goes up to about \$48,000. I think that for the up to \$200 for families, it starts somewhere around \$48,000 and phases out, I think, somewhere around \$65,000, give or take. It's very significant relief.

Many people have had a lot of fun in this Legislature and around the province talking about the impact of the HST on families. This credit is only available for northerners and is in addition to all the other tax cuts that you've heard referenced here often that are permanent. I want people who are following this on television to

remember this stat if they can: If you are able to qualify for—and receive the maximum as a family—the \$200 tax credit, you would have to spend approximately \$2,500 on previously PST-exempt goods and services before you would use up that \$200. I'm going to repeat that: If you get the full \$200 tax credit, you will have to spend about \$2,500 on previously PST-exempt items before you will use up that \$200 tax credit, and that's only one of the permanent tax reductions that are in place not only for northerners but for all people across Ontario. This is a very significant piece, and we're proud to have it.

One of the other tax reductions that we've heard of is the 1% reduction on the first \$37,000 of income. Some 93% of people in the province of Ontario are going to pay less tax, 1% on the first \$37,000, and many people are obviously going to qualify for that. That 1% is \$370. When you take that into income and you're taxed on that, let's say you net \$300. When we take the \$300 and add it to the \$200 on the tax credit, that's \$500 times about \$1,250 apiece. Now you have to spend \$6,000 on previously PST-exempt items before you will have used up just those two reductions, and I haven't mentioned the sales tax credits for individuals and families that are means-tested.

All of this is why there is such a broad section of people across the province of Ontario who are supporting the HST. It's why poverty groups are very publicly supporting it. I'm not here to say all, but a broad section of people, whether it's from the poverty side, whether it's the business side, whether it's municipal leaders, whether it's individuals, are very, very supportive of this. When you start to add up the permanent reductions—and I know the opposition likes to talk about the transitional money and bribing this and buying that—that's the one-time transitional assistance of up to \$300 for singles and up to \$1,000 for families, one time—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Absolutely. But in addition to the one-time money, there is a series of permanent, significant tax reductions, and people need to file their tax returns to make sure they take advantage of all of those tax reductions. They need to make sure they do that.

The last piece that I want to talk a little bit about that, as a government and as a northern caucus member, I'm very proud we committed to and continued our commitment to is the northern Ontario heritage fund. Back in 2003, when I was first elected to this Legislature, I was appointed the parliamentary assistant to the then Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Rick Bartolucci. One of the first things he asked me to do in my capacity as his parliamentary assistant was to tour the province and see what we were ultimately going to do with the northern Ontario heritage fund. When that fund was created in the late 1980s by the Liberal government of David Peterson, the northern Ontario heritage fund was intended to be there to create private sector employment in the province. Somewhere from its inception in the late 1980s to the time we arrived in 2003, that \$60 million per year was no longer being used to create private sector



employment but had become a public infrastructure fund, I guess, for lack of using perhaps stronger language.

The purpose of the tour I undertook in 2004—we toured about eight communities in Ontario, and in each of those eight communities I would think we heard from anywhere from 15 to 25 different groups. All of those groups—no; wrong to say “all of them.” Many of those groups maintained and came through very clearly to me that they were interested in seeing the northern Ontario heritage fund revert back to its original mandate under David Peterson in terms of trying to create private sector jobs in the province of Ontario.

So when that consultation ended, we came back, we filed an interim report, and that's exactly what we've been seeing happen in northern Ontario with that fund for some four or five years now. But more to the point, when we were elected in 2003, the northern Ontario heritage fund had \$60 million in it. In the 2007 election, we made a commitment to the northern Ontario heritage fund that we were going to ramp it up by \$10 million a year over the course of the next four years. In 2008, it went from \$60 million to \$70 million; in 2009, it went from \$70 million to \$80 million; and from 2009 to 2010, as contained in our budget, we have met our commitment. There is now \$90 million this year in the northern Ontario heritage fund, \$30 million more than there was in 2007, representing \$60 million more having been spent in those three years on top of the original \$60 million annually spent through that fund. This represents a tremendous commitment to the people of northern Ontario.

It would have been very easy for us to have taken that \$60 million, \$70 million, \$80 million out of the northern Ontario heritage fund. It would have been very simple for us not to maintain the commitment to go from \$60 million to \$70 million or from \$70 million to \$80 million or from \$80 million to \$90 million, given the economic circumstances that we find ourselves in. It would have been very simple. But not only have we maintained the fund; we've increased the fund by \$30 million over the last three years. It's now up to \$90 million, there to create private sector employment in northern Ontario only. We could have taken it out, and we didn't.

I should remind people interested in northern Ontario as well that the last time there was a recession in the province, when the NDP was in government, they took the entire \$60 million out of the northern Ontario heritage fund and did something with it. I wasn't here, but I'm sure they thought they found a more appropriate use for it at that time. I'm not sure the people of northern Ontario agreed with them.

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My 20 minutes is up, but I just want to thank all the members of the northern caucus, who work very hard on these issues that I've had 20 minutes here today to speak about. We're very excited about this budget. We think it's a good budget, especially given the economic circumstances that we find ourselves in in the province at this time.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan has informed the House this afternoon of his views on the budget, and certainly, in response, from the opposition side, we hold a very different view, obviously. We have been continuing to put forward our points with respect to this government's budgetary policy.

I would like to use my brief two minutes here in questions and comments to actually ask the member a question. The government of Ontario has declared war on the pharmacy sector in the province of Ontario. Clearly, that's what's happened. Some of the government members apparently don't understand that, but that's what's happened. They're pursuing a policy of taking hundreds of millions of dollars out of the income of pharmacists, which we're told will lead to the closure of many pharmacies in small-town Ontario and probably northern Ontario as well. As well, there will be reduced service for patients, and patients—in many cases, you'd have to characterize this as a cut in health care.

I would ask the member: Has he heard from pharmacists in his riding? Is he concerned about this issue? If he has heard from his pharmacists, what is he doing to advocate for them? What is he doing to bring those concerns to the attention of the Minister of Health so that we can try to influence the government's policy to take another look at this issue and not destroy the pharmacy sector in the province of Ontario?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened intently to the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan. I'm always interested in the story he tries to weave to avoid the McGuinty government's responsibility for the destruction of jobs in the forest sector.

Everyone acknowledges that the forest sector is going through some changes. I don't know where the member has been; everyone acknowledges that. But what's happening in Ontario is, a whole industry is virtually leaving the province. The member is from Thunder Bay. No less than nine paper machines have shut down in Thunder Bay during this government's six years in government—thousands of jobs in his home community.

As they've closed, they've been very clear about what's happening. When the paper machines in Kenora were closed, the company said very publicly, “It's because the government is forcing up the industrial hydro bill.” When Dryden, the most modern paper mill complex in all of Canada, closed, a mill that makes office paper—no office paper is made in Ontario anymore; it all has to come from outside the province—when the two paper machines were shut down, the company was very clear: Their hydro bill had escalated by 40% over five years under the McGuinty government. When Cascades shut down their machines in Thunder Bay, they were very clear: It was the hydro bill. Bowater is very clear: Its mill in Thunder Bay has become the highest-electricity-cost mill of all their mills anywhere in Canada and the United States. Similarly, St. Marys, which shut down the operations in Sault Ste. Marie a few weeks ago, said, “It's our hydro bill; we cannot afford to pay this.”



I say that what the government has done is too little, too late. Yes, after thousands of people have been put out of work and the mills are closed, to come along and say, "Well, we're going to cap the rights rates now" is a little too little and a little too late.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan I think shed a lot of light on the severe challenges that are being faced by the forestry industry in the province of Ontario.

There's no doubt about it. When the Canadian dollar was at 63 cents US, it was common knowledge—it was reported in all the business papers—that, in fact, the forestry industry in Ontario was doing extremely well because they had a product that was going into other markets—it's all valued in US dollars—at a 40% discount. So we've witnessed, as the Canadian dollar moved to parity and beyond, the kind of pressure that that certainly put on not only the forestry industry in the province of Ontario but the forestry industry in Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia and other jurisdictions, and even the forestry industry in the southern United States, which has a very different growing season to what's experienced here in the province of Ontario.

The member is quite right that the government of Ontario has responded to some very difficult situations, but I find it interesting that the new NDP poster boy across Canada, Darrell Dexter, the Premier of Nova Scotia, introduced his new budget on April 6, increasing the harmonized sales tax in his province from 13% to 15%, and his finance minister called it "smart, strategic, and steady" to increase the HST in Nova Scotia—because it's a tax down there that is progressive. The people need it. They need the revenue to increase revenues in the government of Nova Scotia.

This is a real doozy: The new health minister of Nova Scotia looks to constrain health care spending in that province. They increased the HST. They're going to constrain health care spending.

And that's the new NDP poster boy in the province of Nova Scotia.

I really appreciated the comments from the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. He said—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to lend my voice to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, who passionately outlined his work as chair of the northern caucus. We need to applaud him for the work he has personally done with the northern caucus, and the northern caucus itself, for bringing the voice of the north to the government directly, through the members of the northern caucus. He outlined very clearly that, unfortunately, some members are using it as an opportunity to continue to do the things they always do: government bad, opposition good; nothing's right, everything's wrong.

Quite frankly, he laid out quite clearly the actions that this government did—he himself, along with the northern

caucus—which seems to have been lost in the minds of the people on the other side, who sit back trying to say that there was no way anyone should have done anything else other than what they thought during this economic meltdown. Those companies had all of the reasons and more that the member was talking about to explain why it happened here in northern Ontario; it happened in southern Ontario; it happened in British Columbia; it happened in Canada; it happened around the world. What we were seeing was the response to that and how a government was able to craft a budget that is trying to address what has happened around the world. China was losing jobs, for crying out loud. To turn around and say that the member hasn't got an idea of what he's talking about is not just a comment that's based on whether or not he made the 20 minutes' worth—he filled every minute of that 20 minutes in an articulate and very sound manner, in which he said that the north was going to be supported by this government.

What's really unfortunate about this is that we're not entering into the debate. We get a member on the other side who wants to talk about something else that's happening in health care, and he doesn't even want to talk about the north. Talk to the speech that was made, and I'll tell you—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank all of the members who spoke, even those who didn't respond to the 20-minute speech and found something else that they wanted to talk about.

When I talked about the relief that is in this budget for the forestry sector, I want to again remind the people of northern Ontario that when you hear somebody tell you that this is too little, too late—the people in northern Ontario need to know that this is misleading them, by trying to imply that there has not been assistance for forestry companies over the last three, four, five years. I laid out, in my 20 minutes, three or four or five different programs through a variety of means that have been in place for years to support forestry companies.

I understand and appreciate that there are always going to be people around here who want to try to focus the messaging on only one part. It is to completely ignore what is obvious and becoming more obvious, I would say, to most people every month or so.

I must say, too, I think it's a bit unfortunate when we convey a message to laid-off workers who may think, "If the McGuinty government would just lower energy rates by this much, I'll have my job back"—when he makes that message, people in all those communities who have listened to him say the same thing for six years, who bought in and believed it, who thought, "If only energy prices would go down, my mill would reopen." He'd been misleading them for six years. It's wrong, and he shouldn't have been doing it.

He talked about Cascades. Cascades has changed ownership three or four times in the last 15 years. I wonder why.



He talked about the mill in Dryden, but what he didn't tell you is, that big mill in Dryden—he talked about their energy rates. Sixty per cent of their energy is produced how? Burning natural gas. He has never told you that in six years, but he wants to lay that one at the doorstep of the McGuinty government as well.

1620

I'm very proud of what's in this budget, especially for the people of the province of Ontario in northern Ontario. It's a good budget; I'm very proud of it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I'm standing to address what's essentially a spending plan for the year 2010. I do so recognizing the fact that this government has been told many, many times about the danger of the road that it has been travelling down since its inception very clearly. One way I would summarize it is, we have a government that is addicted to both taxing and spending; hence, the well-known phrase, the creature known as the tax-and-spend Liberal.

This government very clearly spent its way through the good times, spent its way into a recession, and now it's attempting to spend its way out of a recession. They see a problem and they throw money at it. The difficulty is, by throwing money at a problem, that in itself becomes a problem.

You cannot spend your way out of a recession. Bob Rae proved that a number of years ago. That was the exact strategy that the Bob Rae government followed at that time, and we now see the Dalton McGuinty Liberals attempting to prove that all over again. You cannot spend your way out of a recession. And I may repeat this a number of times. But apart from their spending, this government does not have a revenue problem; this government has a spending problem. The money that's coming in, the revenue that is coming in, is coming in at record levels. When you have a spending problem—we have the result that by the year 2012-13, we know that at this rate of spending, the Dalton McGuinty government will double the debt in their reign as a provincial body. For that reason, and we hear this expression a lot as well, Dalton McGuinty is known as "Dalton the Debt-Doubler." It's a term that's being picked up certainly in my riding.

Very clearly, apart from these problems that I've been hearing all afternoon, we must consider a number of remedies. For example, we must make government smaller. We must end deficit spending and balance the budget. When we're done, we need to produce a government that is effective in performing its key functions, and it must focus on those key functions. For this government in particular, the task is huge.

What I do suggest is that Dalton McGuinty's record of high taxes, corporate subsidies and record deficits clearly has left Ontario as a have-not province. It has resulted in what we see now as a lower standard of living than rust-belt jurisdictions like the state of Michigan. We've heard this before. We have a higher unemployment rate than countries like Greece and the Central African Republic.

This McGuinty government is spending at an unprecedented record level; yet, at the same time, we see a reduction in services that we all rely on. We see a government that's closing emergency rooms, a government that's laying off nurses across the province.

I want to make reference to the \$289.3-billion debt that is projected for the year 2012-13, a debt that will be double what this government ran up in their first year in office. What does a debt of that size mean? It means our children will have fewer jobs. They'll pay higher taxes obviously, have lower incomes and be less able to afford homes because of this debt. Today, it seems that we're selling off the house and leaving the kids with the mortgage.

Add to these troubles the high Canadian dollar. It is heartening that the members from northern Ontario made reference to this issue. The high Canadian dollar is an issue that was not discussed in the budget speech, regrettably. Obviously, this contributes to a decline in our exports to the United States.

I feel it's very worrisome, what this budget does not address. I'll give you a few examples.

For example, unimpeded access to the US market must remain Ontario's top economic priority—no mention of that fact in the budget speech. This was not addressed. It was not addressed in the speech from the throne either. We must recognize that the United States, by far, is Canada's and Ontario's largest trading partner. This government cannot afford to neglect our relationship with our southern neighbour.

The US economy, I remind the members opposite, is not only the world's largest; it's the world's most powerful. Unfortunately for our steel industry—I think specifically of Hilton works and the Lake Erie works—agriculture and manufacturing jobs, the financial crisis, the economic recession we find ourselves in now, a recession that started in 2008, has sparked a new wave of protectionist measures in the United States. And President Obama's buy-American provision is not the only new protectionist measure. We also are subject to country-of-origin labelling—the COOL moniker—which is applied to many of our food products, and which has contributed to the decline in pork exports and the decline in beef. That commodity was already at rock bottom because of BSE.

Regrettably, this budget does not mention agriculture. Very recently, some of the members opposite have been scrambling to cover for what was not covered in the budget speech: the forest industry, for example. There's no mention of the softwood lumber trade war. That's been going on for years. It continues today into an era now of plummeting US housing construction.

Since 9/11, the American attitude towards our shared border has changed dramatically, and obviously, cross-border trade has suffered as a result. Resulting border restrictions and waiting costs continue to threaten the integrated supply chain with respect to manufacturing—again, no mention of that in the budget.

We have two US cap-and-trade bills that are looming to reduce greenhouse gases. As a result, Congress will



impose tariffs or levies at the border—in their view, to protect their trade-exposed industry from other jurisdictions that may have different regulations or different levels of greenhouse gas allowances. None of these issues were discussed in the recent budget speech. Again, I find that worrisome.

The problem continues. I reiterate: This government does not have a revenue problem; it has a spending problem. It's attempting to spend its way out of the results of the recession. This year's budget indicates that the McGuinty government has increased spending something like 70% since taking office. Expenditures for this now-commenced fiscal year will come in at a whopping \$125.9 billion. By 2011-12, the Ontario Ministry of Finance projects that the province will be raising \$100 billion in revenue. Again, we don't have a revenue problem. Revenue will have increased 46% since the year Dalton McGuinty took office, yet expenses still exceed revenue by nearly \$20 billion.

We may recall—it was just the day before the budget announcement—that this government congratulated themselves in announcing that their original deficit projection was off, bringing the deficit for the 2009-10 year to \$21.3 billion. Again, only in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario could a \$21.3-billion deficit be considered good news. This is still far and away the largest deficit in the history of Ontario, and even with this eleventh-hour recalculation, it's still greater than all the other provinces combined.

Every hour of every day, this government spends \$2.8 million more than it receives in revenue. At this current rate of spending, by 2012-13, as we know, the debt will double.

1630

If we go back to 2003, Ontario's debt has grown by \$65 billion and government spending has increased by 65%, yet over the same period, Ontario's economy has only grown by something less than 6%. On a per-household basis, Mr. McGuinty has increased the province's debt by \$13,500 for every family in Ontario.

Wasn't it just a few years ago that Mr. McGuinty stated, "I ... will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters and not run deficits"? To continue the quote: "I promise to abide by the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act." That was the pledge that was signed on September 11, 2003. Of course, it didn't take him long to tear up that pre-election pledge, sending us down the trail of successive deficit budgets that will take years to climb out from under, and I think this government projects another seven years of deficit spending. You add up deficits; every deficit accumulates into the debt.

If this government has proven one thing, it's that spending is the driver of deficits and debt. Just to reiterate for anyone here who maybe doesn't get the connection between a deficit and a debt, deficits occur when a government borrows money because the revenues it collects, in its view, are insufficient to finance their spending. This is, of course, different from debt, which is

basically the accumulation of deficits plus interest on the debt over time.

It's not difficult to recognize that more deficits mean more debt. More debt obviously means more interest to be paid, and that means fewer resources for health, education and other government services.

Considering where the money is being spent, I also wonder to what extent this Ontario program of stimulus spending, of shovel-ready spending, has been effective, either in stimulating economic activity or creating jobs, for that matter. In my view, I suspect: very little. What I see, essentially, is a process, the end result being very simply a redistribution of wealth rather than increased economic activity as a result of direct government spending.

Despite spending more than \$32 billion on stimulus and shovel-ready projects and promising to create more than a million new jobs, the McGuinty government has presided, as we know, over a net loss of 141,600 net jobs. That was in 2009, and since becoming Premier, we have seen the loss of something in the order of 300,000 manufacturing jobs.

At the same time, we have witnessed a staggering expansion of the public sector—eight times as fast the private sector. In fact, there is some evidence of jobs being created through stimulus funding. I saw some recent figures; each job created has required something in the order of \$1 million in stimulus spending.

Of course, stimulus spending creates public sector jobs. Somebody has to sit there and put the stamp on the forms, and under this government's reign, this is partly reflected in data we see from the so-called sunshine list. Under the sunshine list, we have seen a tripling of public sector employees making over \$100,000 a year. Since 2003, the number of government servants at that level of income has gone from 20,249 to 63,836.

Anyone listening will understand that there are successful ways of stimulating an economy—stimulus funding, if you will. The approach which has been proven time and time again is to focus on tax cuts. Unsuccessful stimulus funding focuses on government spending.

We had six days of finance committee hearings, and during those days I came to realize that, although roads are being paved and arenas are being planned for construction, there was virtually no evidence—and I asked the question time and time again—of direct jobs, permanent jobs, being created as a result of Ontario's shovel-ready stimulus spending: There were no figures available.

Once again, I submit that there is a lesson that this government refuses to learn, and I feel this is a key lesson with respect to Ontario's economic competitiveness. We must focus on tax relief. We must provide incentives for people in Ontario to work, to save money, to invest, and to be entrepreneurial. I do wish to draw attention to the fact that this present budget before us does virtually nothing to address the destimulating effect of a host of new taxes, fees, permits and licences, includ-



ing all the attendant rules and regulations, red tape and forms to fill out that go along with this. These kinds of disincentives, these kinds of fees and taxes, raise the cost of living and make our province more uncompetitive with comparable jurisdictions. There's a list we can go through: the health tax, obviously going back a number of years; the corporate income taxes that came in right as this government took office; small business taxes; driver's licence renewal fees; taxes on beer, wine and spirits; new land transfer taxes; new vehicle registration fees in Toronto; OHIP de-listings—for example, chiropractic, eye exams and physiotherapy; electronics recycling taxes; tire taxes; registration and licence fees for people who operate commercial vehicles; the new electricity and energy taxes that were announced just a week or so ago; and, of course, the implementation of the \$3-billion HST tax grab—which alone supersedes the health tax and is now the single largest tax increase in the history of Ontario—which will be coming in July 1.

As a result, private sector growth has lagged, obviously, in large part due to the excessive red tape, the rules and the regulations—regulations that cost us money and cost us jobs. The Toronto Star reports that in the province of Ontario, there's something on the order of 500,000 regulatory items out there, and the CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, estimates that this burden is costing business in Ontario something like \$11 billion a year. Most of this over-regulation really has no purpose other than to ramp up the cost of business and kill jobs. It costs us time. It costs us money. It forces businesses to either pay up or shut down or leave the province.

Regrettably, we've seen a number of them that have decided on the last two options, certainly down in my neck of the woods. In my area, we still have well over 1,000 steel workers on the picket line at US Steel in Nanticoke. There is an important meeting tonight. Perhaps we have an agreement coming forward with US Steel.

Again, my concern: It's worrisome that in the budget speech, there was no mention of the steel industry; no mention of any kind of a strategy for primary industry—steel or any other related industry; no mention of agriculture; and no mention of help for farmers.

I see someone across the way shaking his head, I assume in agreement. It is sad: no mention of agriculture in the budget speech.

1640

Meanwhile, south of the border—I wish to reiterate this—we have Obama's buy-America provisions; we have country-of-origin labelling, BS-related measures, putting our industries and our farmers at a further competitive disadvantage. I really regret that, on that point alone, whether it be forestry, agriculture or heavy industry, this budget made no mention.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the opportunity to follow the speech of this member.

There is no question that this budget that's before us is one that is not going to address, in the way that they need to be addressed, the needs of this province. There's no question that, in fact, at the end of this budget, when it has run its course, Ontario will continue the decline of its economic base, just as it has in the last few years, when times were better.

It's unfortunate that this budget, instead of offering the kind of investment in transit and in social services that Ontarians needed, offers a corporate tax cut and a standstill on action on the environment and on climate change.

When I look at this budget—and I will get an opportunity briefly to talk about it at greater length—I say that this is not a budget of leadership. This is a standstill, make-sure-that-the-wheels-continue-to-turn budget, ignoring the reality of what's going on in Ontario: the reality that, in fact, as a manufacturing jurisdiction, we have continued to lose the base that we must have. This is a budget that will not arrest that decline.

This is not a budget that will deal with the polarization of the population in this city and in this province. As you, Speaker, are well aware, studies have been done showing the change in incomes and the distribution of middle-income households in the GTA. Increasingly, we have poor people living in some areas, wealthy people living in others, and the mix that was historically Toronto's heritage, Toronto's gift to this province, is being lost.

This budget does not arrest that polarization, does not arrest that drift to setting people aside in different areas rather than bringing us all together. It is a mistaken budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I'm delighted to have an opportunity to speak to my friend from Haldimand-Norfolk's dissertation on the budget. I would have to suggest that in the world we live in, he seems to be in another one.

The world we live in is one that faced a financial collapse of unparalleled devastation over the last year and a half. The world we live in saw a collapse of the financial sector, which the Western world has faced, whether you're the government of the US, Canada, Great Britain, France, Germany—the major industrialized countries of the world—or even the Far East. We live in a world that is very intertwined, that has very interesting and important trade links on a very broad scale.

I would suggest to him that if he looks at the economies of Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania or New York, he will find that those industrial economies in the US would be very happy to be in the position that Ontario is in, led by Premier McGuinty and this government.

This government has done things that I don't think we could actually have imagined over the past—well, forever. Who would think you would buy shares in General Motors? Who would think that you would buy shares in Chrysler? Who would think the government of the US



would do the same thing, even under George Bush? That's what we've had to do. That's what the situation is.

Ontario will be stronger, is stronger, and will lead Canada out of this recession.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Following along in the previous speaker's bent, who would think that we would have a \$21.4-billion deficit, twice the deficit of 1995, when the NDP left government? Who would think that we would lead all of the provinces in terms of negative growth in Canada?

The reason, perhaps, that Canada has not suffered the same fate as some of the states in the United States has nothing to do with the McGuinty government. It has to do with the solid financial sector, which is regulated totally by the federal government and not by the provincial government. The provincial government has nothing to do with banks. The banks in Canada have been rock solid in relation to anywhere else in the world, and that has nothing to do with Dalton McGuinty.

Now, getting back to my friend from Haldimand-Norfolk, I want to tell you, I've talked to some of his constituents recently, and there is no harder-working rural MPP than Toby Barrett in Haldimand-Norfolk. Toby Barrett works night and day to represent his people. There's nobody who knows the suffering of the agricultural community more than Toby Barrett, and Toby Barrett has brought to this Legislature the fact that this government has forgotten agriculture in this budget. They've forgotten the plight of the agricultural sector, and particularly, might I say from eastern Ontario, in the eastern Ontario rural area. Toby Barrett should be listened to, and this government hasn't listened to Toby Barrett because they haven't included agriculture in the budget—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I did listen intently to the presentation by the member.

It's interesting, as I look at the budget numbers here: The budget for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs will increase by some \$140 million over the previous fiscal year. We, as a government, negotiated with the grains and oilseeds sector in the province of Ontario to come up with a risk-management program. I say to my friend, there was a full ad in the recent edition of the Hill Times with all the umbrella organizations in the province of Ontario. They know where the province of Ontario stands in terms of a cost-of-production model for our farmers that are not covered by supply management. What was the title of that ad? I'll get it for the member. "We want Minister Ritz to come to the table and provide the 60% share," which is the share the federal government must provide in order to make a cost-of-production model work in the province of Ontario for those sectors that are not covered by supply management. That's what that ad said. Every umbrella group in the province of Ontario has come together in unison to put pressure on Minister Ritz to bring that to the table.

It's interesting. I look at the tax cuts for businesses: cutting the general corporate income tax rate from 14% to 12% and then 10% over the next three years; cutting the corporate income tax rate from manufacturing and processing, mining, logging, farming and fishing from 12% to 10%; cutting the small business corporate income tax rate from 5.5% to 4.5%; and finally, eliminating the small business deduction surtax of some 4.25%. Those are progressive measures to help Ontario's business community.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Haldimand-Norfolk has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the responses from the various members, and I'm quite heartened that 20 minutes of facts and figures would generate a bit of interest.

I am concerned, though, and I'll reiterate what was not mentioned in the budget. Agriculture was not mentioned in the budget speech, and with respect to forestry, somebody has to deal with that softwood lumber dispute; that's been going on for too many years. That's in the interest, obviously, of all three parties here.

There was made mention of states across the way—Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, the large, formerly industrial states. They put President Obama in. President Obama and the big unions have a buy-American program that is killing our steel industry. We have to go beyond just debating taxing and spending and more taxing on our own residents of Ontario. We have to look beyond Ottawa; we have to talk to Washington.

**1650**

With respect to agriculture, which regrettably was not mentioned, we fully support risk management. There was a three-year pilot program for cash crop. That's been cancelled. Three and a half years ago, the federal government made it clear to the Ontario government that they would not fund companion programs. You knew that going in. To your credit, you did a three-year pilot. We request one for horticulture and beef. We request one for hogs. No mention of these companion programs—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Member from Peterborough.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Why is it you brought in a program, you cancelled it and you—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock for a minute. The member for Peterborough, I have asked you repeatedly. Next time, you'll be named. Thank you.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Just to wrap up, this government does not have a revenue problem. It has a spending problem. You cannot spend your way out of a recession.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** As I said earlier, it's my opportunity, my honour to have a chance to talk today about the budget that was presented by this government. I'm



not going to cover every element of the budget, but there are five areas that I want to touch on in particular.

The first, obviously, is the whole question of the cut in investment to Transit City, which I see as symbolic of everything that is wrong with this budget, everything that is wrong with this Liberal government's approach to actually making sure that we have a livable province and that we have an economic and environmental future. That's reflected in this decision. Some \$4 billion was taken out of the Transit City project.

I have to say that a few years ago I went to the announcement in Mississauga for the whole grand \$50-billion project. I asked even then, "So where's all this money going to come from?" Some parts of it were committed: \$11 billion, so much smaller than the \$50 billion the Premier talked about in the first place, and even of that money, \$4 billion now is being moved out.

Some, like the Minister of Finance, may say it's simply being delayed. To my knowledge, there isn't a date when that money's going to actually hit the ground and provide the transit that is going to be needed in this city—that is needed in this city and in this province right now.

There are real costs to not making that investment, as you are well aware, Speaker, because you have many schools in your riding. You deal with parents of young children who have asthma. You are well aware of the impact of smog in this city on the health of children, on the health of those who have heart disease, on the health of those who have lung disease and the health of those who will develop those conditions by breathing in that dirty air.

So what's happened with this either cut or delay and, in either event, a pushing off of the investment in transit, is that the air in this city will continue to kill people when it does not have to happen, when we do not have to have people pushed into emergency rooms because they are breathing air that damages their health.

At the first level, this is a mistake because it harms the health of people in this community, it increases smog, and we don't have to have that happen.

Let's say it doesn't matter to you that people get sick from this decision. Let's say that Premier McGuinty here decided, "Well, I don't care about health, well-being or our children. I'm just going to care about the dollars and the economic well-being of the greater Toronto area." Even on that basis alone, a very cold basis, it's a substantial mistake.

As you are aware, the cost of congestion in the GTA is in the range of \$4 billion to \$6 billion. This project would not eliminate all the congestion, but to the extent that it had a real impact—and I believe that it would—then that congestion would be reduced and the cost to our economy would be reduced. Our overall wealth would be increased. But instead of taking a step that's good for health, for the environment and for our economy, this has been pushed to the side, if not cut entirely.

This is the time to make this investment. Interest rates are at historic lows. People need the work all over this

province. People need the work in Thunder Bay making streetcars. People need the work making the steel. People need the work doing construction.

Now is the time to do this. If the economy is at its peak, interest rates are high and the demand for labour is high, then we know that the cost of this project will soar. Why you would not do it when the conditions are at their absolute best for a large-scale infrastructure project is beyond me. It is false economy. It is a misunderstanding of how we build this province and how we build the city that this Legislature is in.

Madam Speaker, there is a social cost that you are entirely aware of. A few years ago, a professor at the University of Toronto, Dave Hulchanski, and a team of urban geographers looked at what's happening in Toronto. What's happening in Toronto is what has happened in Latin American cities and what has happened in the past in European cities. That's that there's a concentration of more and more wealthy people at the centre of the city, where it's easier to get around, where it's convenient, where they're close to the workplace. And increasingly, poor people are pushed into the suburbs, where the transit and the congestion are far worse.

What we have with Transit City is an effort to make sure that every person in this city has an opportunity to conveniently and affordably get to work, get to visit their friends and family, get to travel on a fairly—"free" is not the right word, because there's not a lack of expense, but travel on a basis where they are not inhibited by disastrously bad bus service or inhibited by their inability to afford a car. If you want to have social cohesion, people have to have that ability to get around their city. They have to be able to get to workplaces so that they can employ themselves. On all those bases, it was mistake to cancel Transit City.

But I want to say that there's one other piece that I touched on in a question today that is quite extraordinary to me. I have heard the Premier and I have heard the Minister of the Environment speak about climate change and the absolute necessity of action. They understand the consequences of not acting. They know that they can be very dire for this society.

When the climate report came out from the Minister of the Environment prior to Christmas, you may well remember that the minister's report showed that, with the efforts that were on the books, this province couldn't meet the weak targets that were already set by this government. Then, a few weeks later, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario came out and said, "Yep, that's right. They can't meet their targets. They're failing to meet their target. In fact, after 2014, greenhouse gas emissions continue to climb—they'll miss the 2020 target by even more than the 2014 target."

In his commentary, the Environmental Commissioner was very clear: If you're going to deal with this issue, you've got to deal with transportation. You've got to have investment in transportation. One would think, given the fact that this McGuinty government has said



that climate action is a priority, that indeed they would follow through and deliver the goods on Transit City to at least be able to say, "We're doing what we need to have done there." That's not what is happening. That decision alone is enough to condemn this budget and say that no one should vote for it. That decision alone says that the priorities of this government—environmentally, socially, economically—are wrong-headed and ultimately destructive of the way of life that we want to build here in Ontario.

I want to speak as well about the issue of daycare. In this budget, thanks to the pressure of parents from all over the province, \$63 million was put in to ensure that subsidies for daycares continue to go forward. That was critical. There were parents who were desperate because they knew the impact of having that daycare subsidy cut to thousands of children and thousands of families across this province.

In the budget, when you go on to talk about full-day learning, we have the other shoe that may well drop and pose huge problems for daycare workers, families and children across Ontario.

1700

People who are watching this budget debate are well aware that Dr. Charles Pascal wrote an extensive and highly praised report on how to deliver full-day early learning in this province. That is something that the people, the families, the children of this province need and need badly. When he brought forward that report, he was very clear that if you want to do it, you have to do the whole integrated package, because if you do it partially, there are very negative consequences. The chickens start to circle; they're looking for a place to roost.

We're looking at those consequences now. In my riding, in Jackman school, parents are contacting me, saying that if there is not support for the existing non-profit daycare in the school, then the loss of the four- and five-year-olds to full-day learning, as good as that program would be, could well mean the collapse of the daycare centre itself and the loss of care for the two- and three-year-olds.

We don't want to lose the care for toddlers. We don't want to lose the care for the younger kids. But in fact, if you don't have transitional funding and you don't have a plan that allows those daycares to go from one state of being to another, then we will lose daycare, and that is disastrous; that is a huge mistake. This budget so far has not revealed where the funds will come from for that transition. Those funds have to be there, and if they have to be redirected from another pocket, they have to be redirected. But a failure to put the money in in the first place has caused huge disruption, huge anxiety for parents, for daycare workers and for children. That is a fundamental mistake.

I don't know how you can mess up something as good as all-day care—I really don't—because it's such a good idea, such a necessary thing, but the reality is that today, all-day care has provided hope for quite a few families and tremendous anxiety and worry for many more. This has to be corrected.

In the course of this budget debate process, I call on the government to look at the daycare situation, the all-day learning, recognize the impact of that hole in its budget on families and correct that so that families are not made to pay a price for this initiative.

I want to address the question of hunger, the special diet allowance that is going to be cut and the impact that will have on people in this province. People have contacted me; my constituents have contacted me, people with heart problems, coupled with mental health problems, who do not know how they will function with a substantial reduction in the allowance they get for their diet. People have contacted me who have MS or other long-term debilitating diseases and don't know how they will be able to make their lives work without a proper diet.

If the government is going to cut what we have now and not put in place a system that safeguards the health and well-being of those who depend on this society for their existence, then it has made a fundamental moral mistake and it has to correct this budget.

There are other elements to this. When one person is sick in the community, you can be very sure that at some point, that person will be sick in a hospital. There are costs that come from treating people badly and making them hungry—abandoning them to hunger. That has to be corrected in the course of this budget.

People should not be put in a situation of desperation. Right now, that is where they are headed. This McGuinty government made huge noises about how it was going to address poverty. In this budget, with one step, it has plunged many into despair.

I want to talk about something that bears on the budget, that will affect capital spending or operating spending—it is not clear which yet—but which is not directly addressed in the way that it should be addressed in this budget, and that's the sale of crown assets, also known as privatization.

This past Saturday, Adam Radwanski wrote in the *Globe and Mail* about the meeting that Dalton McGuinty had with the *Globe and Mail* editorial board and the questions posed to the Premier about the privatization of crown assets. I have to say that everybody should read that article because in the course of the article, it becomes clear that the Premier is looking for a way to make this sell-off one that is palatable to the public, and they have not yet found the right messaging, the right box to put it in so that they can sell it, both in the larger political sense and in terms of the cash to come in.

The Premier used the phrase that they don't want to be seen to be "burning the furniture to stay warm," but in fact, that's all that you can do with this. What else can it be? We've been talking about the sale, the lease, the partial sale and the financially creative and imaginative repackaging of four critical assets in this province: the lottery and gaming commission and the LCBO, which bring in billions of dollars a year into this province, and Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One, which also bring in money but more importantly are critical levers



when it comes to operating the economy of Ontario and in terms of shaping the future of Ontario's energy industries.

The company that was hired to do the packaging work on this: Goldman Sachs. Others who have sat in this chamber before have heard me talk about this company. I suggest they do a Google search. I suggest they look at the New York Times and the report that was written about TXU, the Texas utility company that was purchased by a group of which Goldman Sachs was the leader. That purchase didn't turn out very well. The Canada pension plan put in quite a bit of money and apparently lost most of that money, according to the New York Times. According to the New York Times, the partners who were working with Goldman Sachs, at one point in the whole process, started asking themselves, "Who exactly is Goldman Sachs working for in this deal?"

That's part of the reason that I've asked for a copy of the contract with Goldman Sachs: to see if, in fact, Ontario is protected from this company, because you have to know that the contract that is said to have been signed with Goldman Sachs for \$200,000 to assess these firms and make a recommendation to the province on how to proceed—200,000 bucks is what they charge to pick up the phone. It is an extraordinarily small amount of money. In many ways, it's like a free estimate. It's a sales job. To have that company here looking at our assets, getting inside the books, getting behind the scenes, troubles me profoundly and should trouble everyone in this province who cares about making sure that our financial future is protected.

Those who don't know this company should be aware that in the early part of this decade, they made an agreement with the government of Greece in which they made a loan to Greece disguised as an exchange of foreign currency, a loan that in fact covered over the reality of Greece's fiscal situation, easing its entry into the European Union. In exchange, Goldman Sachs got access to the future revenue from the national lottery and the national airports. So in fact, Greece got a quick hit of cash and gave away its revenue for decades to come.

How will we know that we're actually getting a good deal from this company? How will it be structured? What will be obscured in the course of the deal that's brought forward? This budget is not over. This budget exists beyond the document that we are dealing with today because the decisions about privatization will have an impact on our revenue for a long time to come and on the money that will be available to this government to spend before the next election.

1710

I see that my time runs short.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I know there's general dismay in the chamber, but I have to say, in my two minutes, which I will get later on, I will try to get to some of the last few points that I think are important to cover.

I want to say that when you think about a budget, you have to see a budget as expressing two things: the

underlying wealth of a society and the relations between the different social and interest groups in this society. The reality in this budget is that the wealthiest are getting a cut through corporate tax cuts and the poorest are going to go hungry. That alone should say that this budget is wrong.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** My colleague opposite, like Lady Godiva, finally reached his close. He had a lot to say in the 20-some-odd minutes there, and it's tough to respond to very much of that in about two minutes, but let me just say at least in passing and in partial response to many significant points he raised—many of which I agree with, by the way—that it was no less than Al Gore who suggested recently that Ontario is far and away the most progressive green jurisdiction on the continent. I think that's pretty high praise, coming from somebody whose environmental credentials are so wonderfully impressive.

I want to also say that transit doesn't begin and end in the city of Toronto. There are other municipalities that look forward in breathless anticipation to some of the potential opportunities, my beloved city of Hamilton being one of those. The proper kind of transit mix—implemented through Metrolinx, another exciting vehicle that our government has put in place—will hopefully lead to some dramatic economic enhancement there.

We just came from a meeting of the standing committee on the full-day learning bill. The member opposite may be pleased to know that a number of very important changes have been made in that area. So we're not pushing off anything; we're pushing forward as best we can.

On the full-day learning front, Pascal did a brilliant piece of work. His work indicated that some 28% of our children arrive at grade 1 cognitively, emotionally and linguistically not prepared to go through that process, and 40% of them never catch up. We're bound and determined that this government's going to make sure those kids have a chance—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I didn't hear all of the member from Toronto-Danforth's speech, but you know what? I agree.

As we look at this budget and we look at the debt load that the province of Ontario is carrying, in terms of other jurisdictions around the world, it's absolutely disgraceful. It's because of the mismanagement of this government; it's because of the way they have mismanaged the economy, never setting aside money in good times. They've spent, spent, spent—gave it away to their friends and their buddies, their consultants etc. We've seen it with eHealth; we've seen it with OLG, but the list goes on and on. Now, they're actually trying to sell this to the citizens of the province of Ontario and would actually expect somebody on this side of the House to vote for this. Not ever would we vote for a disgraceful budget like this.



I look forward to other comments coming from the Liberal members, but as they presented the budget a couple of weeks back, we saw the look on their faces—because there really wasn't anything there. I'll be very curious to see the jobs that are created under the Water Opportunities Act. How can you create jobs there? There are only a few companies that make water filtration equipment etc. in the province, and there are many, many outside, in the rest of the world. However, they think that this jurisdiction is going to attract all that, with high taxes and a mismanaged economy. I don't think that's right. There may be a few jobs here and there. You might get five jobs in North Bay and two or three in Peterborough or something like this, but you're not going to create hundreds of thousands of jobs and all this nonsense they continue to talk about.

So I'm with this member, and we will not be supporting this disgraceful budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I was pleased to be able to sit through and listen to the comments made by my colleague the NDP member for Toronto–Danforth, Peter Tabuns, with respect to this budget motion.

The debate is going to end in a matter of minutes—those are the rules—and before there has been an opportunity for all those who surely want to speak to this motion to have had that chance. It's going to be dealt with in a matter of mere minutes. I'm pretty confident that members of the opposition will be calling for a recorded vote. We want folks out there in Ontario to know where people stand.

I fear that the budget motion is going to pass, because the government has its majority and it's not afraid—it has demonstrated that so many times—to use that majority to impose even the worst of legislative initiatives on the people of Ontario.

The government would have some believe that somehow there's a great recovery taking place here in the province of Ontario. I say, certainly not down where I come from; certainly not up in St. Catharines, a riding that Mr. Bradley and I share—because he has the northern part of it and the centre of it, and I have the south end of it; certainly not down in Niagara Falls. Heck, the casino is laying people off. Do you know what that means and what that implies? The casino was the employer of last resort. I've told this to you before. When you lost your job at Atlas Steel or Union Carbide, because those plants are gone; when you lost your job at Welland Tubes, because that plant is gone; when you lost your job at John Deere, because that plant is gone, maybe you went to Niagara College and you trained to be a blackjack dealer or a slot machine technician and you got hired by the casino. But hell's bells, the casino is laying people off now, so that's not available.

The reality is that this is a jobless recovery. The stock market and the big Bay Street barons who play the market and manipulate it may be making money—Conrad Black is probably turning over some mean bucks,

even when he's sitting in that federal penitentiary down in Florida—but working people are still doing without their jobs.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's a pleasure to rise to make a couple of comments to the member from Toronto–Danforth.

Let me say up front that I did listen to what he had to say. I normally have an enormous amount of respect for the member, but I must say, when I hear his interpretation of the pressure to preserve daycare spaces that was imposed by the people to make that happen—well, I guess we differ in that.

The difference is, we listened. We hoped the federal government would come back to the table. Frankly, they abandoned child care in the province of Ontario. So we came back to them—of course we heard from people. I don't call that pressure; I call that listening to the people and delivering what needs to be done, more so than our friends Doom and Gloom over there. I'm not sure who's Doom and who's Gloom—they can make that decision themselves—but the sky is going to collapse.

Let me tell you what I heard about the budget in my riding, thanks to the chambers that organized a breakfast and a lunch. After we did the presentation, I was congratulated, and our government was congratulated, for coming out with a responsible budget under the circumstances. We didn't rip contracts. We didn't close agricultural offices like the one in Brighton, in my riding, like the former government. No, we kept them. We put some controls. One of their former members closed his own place of employment after he was down here. We didn't take that approach.

That's what I'm hearing every day, wherever I go in my riding. So I'm not sure where the member gets that information.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Toronto–Danforth has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to thank those members from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Simcoe North, Welland and Northumberland–Quinte West for commenting on my speech.

I want to talk first about Mr. McMeekin's comments. He's right: Transit doesn't end with the city of Toronto. That's absolutely true. But I have to say that if this government can get away with cutting \$4 billion from the budget for Transit City in Toronto, those who are in other parts of Ontario should expect that the mercy visited on them will be no less tender. It will be very tender indeed.

1720

There's no question that Hamilton needs more rapid transit, but I don't see this happening. I look at that budget, I see the cut to the replacement fund for buses, which is going to hurt a lot of medium-sized cities and towns in this province, and say that is part of that ongoing process of cutting back the money that needs to go to transit.



I want to speak to the comment made by the member from Simcoe North about water opportunities. I actually think the potential is there for large-scale job creation through water opportunities, but I have to say, and he knows this very well, that if you don't treat your groundwater, as we do at site 41—if you don't treat your groundwater and your river water and your sources of water with respect and make sure they don't get contaminated, it doesn't matter how fancy your water conservation process is; you aren't going to have the water you need to drink. That's a problem that exists all over this province. I get letters and emails on a regular basis from people who are frustrated that they can't get action to—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

Pursuant to standing order 58(d), there having been eight hours of debate, I'm now required to put the question.

On March 25, 2010, Mr. Duncan moved, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

On March 29, 2010, Mr. Hudak moved "that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on March 25, 2010, 'that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government,' be amended by deleting the words following 'that this House' and adding thereto the following:

"Supports the principle that if you do not lose your job, you do not get severance; and

"Cannot support Premier Dalton McGuinty's decision to pay six-month severance packages, worth as much as \$45,000 each, to more than 1,250 HST tax collectors who will transfer to the federal government without losing a day of work; and

"Strongly opposes this government for failing to address any uncertainty in the provisions the McGuinty Liberals negotiated and ratified in the collective bargaining agreements it concluded in 2006 and 2009; the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement; the Ontario Tax Plan for More Jobs and Growth Act, 2009; and the human resource agreement for the transfer of staff from the province of Ontario to the Canada Revenue Agency, resulting in severance payments to HST tax collectors who will transfer to the federal government without losing a day of work; and

"Failing to enact measures in the budget that amend the Ontario Tax Plan for More Jobs and Growth Act, 2009, including schedule R, section 50 and the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement, including part XI and Annex C, ratified and confirmed thereto;

"Concludes that if the McGuinty Liberal government is incapable of protecting the interests of Ontario families

when it comes to so-called severance payments to HST tax collectors, then it cannot be trusted with the stewardship of the provincial finances.'

"Therefore, the government has lost the confidence of this House."

The first question to be decided is the amendment to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that Mr. Hudak's amendment to the motion carry?

All those in favour of motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I'll call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I believe, government House leader, you have something to give me.

The government House leader has just given me a deferral slip. It reads as follows:

"Date: April 12, 2009

"To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the motion by Minister Duncan, government order number 4, be deferred until April 14, 2009"—on the amendment to the motion. Sorry.

On the amendment to the motion—I couldn't read the little squiggle—"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), the amendment to the motion, I request that the vote on the motion by Tim Hudak be deferred until April 14, 2009." Is there consent?

Seeing that there's consent, so ordered.

**Interjection:** But it's 2010, though; it's not 2009.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It's 2009 on the original. Sorry. So is there consent to have the vote on April 14, 2010?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent to have a recorded division on this motion and to defer the vote until Wednesday, April 14, at the time of deferred votes.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Do we have consent to this deferral slip? Agreed. So ordered.

*Vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** We have no further business today. I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

I therefore order that the House will be adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1727.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
		Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby—Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) <b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Oakville Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham—Kent—Essex Niagara West—Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest—Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) <b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges—Markham Brampton—Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock Dufferin—Caledon Newmarket—Aurora Welland Bramalea—Gore—Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry—Prescott—Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean—Carleton Mississauga—Brampton South / Mississauga—Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) <b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	Trinity—Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay—Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough— Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa—Orléans Ottawa—Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound—Muskoka Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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of Ontario**

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Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 13 April 2010**

**Mardi 13 avril 2010**



**Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters**

**Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters**

**Clerk  
Deborah Deller**

**Greffière  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 13 April 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 13 avril 2010

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RETIREMENT HOMES ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LES MAISONS DE RETRAITE

Mr. Phillips moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes / Projet  
de loi 21, Loi réglementant les maisons de retraite.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I should inform the House that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Brampton West.

I'm honoured to lead off this debate. If passed, it's the first time in Ontario's history that we are going to regulate our retirement home industry and our retirement home sector. If passed, the legislation will establish a regulatory body that will have the authority to identify, license, inspect and regulate our retirement home sector. We also will establish care and safety standards for our retirement homes. Perhaps most importantly, we'll ensure that residents of those retirement homes have clearly defined rights in terms of expectations around their contract, their relationship with the retirement home operator and freedom from any abuse—zero tolerance of that. If passed, this legislation will, I think, establish the appropriate oversight of an important part of our province.

If I might, I just want to acknowledge briefly the tremendous work of the staff at the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. I've now been the minister for three months, so I've inherited this project and I'm proud that I have inherited it. I want to acknowledge the dedicated work by our staff, some of whom are here today.

I also want to acknowledge the work that has gone on around the province; we've had consultations in 12 different cities. There have been well over 800 different individuals and organizations that participated in those consultations, and they very much helped to shape the legislation that we're looking at today.

I also want to acknowledge my predecessors. As I say, I've been the minister now for three months, so I have been lucky enough to have the responsibility for bringing

forward this legislation, but my predecessors really helped to shape this. Particularly, I want to acknowledge Aileen Carroll, who was the minister responsible just before me. Really, she devoted a lot of her time and attention to this, and I get an opportunity to bring to fruition, I hope, much of her work.

Why is the legislation important? I think all members of the Legislature understand the changing demographics in our province. In just a few short years, probably in four or five years, there will be more seniors, people 65 years of age and older, than there are young people under 15—quite a dramatic change. Our number of seniors will more than double over the next 20 years, so we need, as a province, to continue to evolve to ensure that we provide the environment that maximizes our opportunities for seniors.

I probably need to declare a conflict here, in that I myself am a senior, so I am particularly interested. I hope it's still appropriate that I proceed with this legislation.

My goal on behalf of the Legislature is, as I said earlier, to try and ensure that this province provides a maximum opportunity for seniors to live to their full potential. I would say that seniors can be anyone from a 90-year-old frail person in a nursing home to a 65-year-old person who is running marathons, continuing to be, perhaps, full-time employed in some endeavour and extremely active. I recognize and we recognize that breadth of seniors. We need to, in this province, ensure that we adapt to that complexity of seniors.

My own view is that there are six areas that we need to focus on. The one we often think of is health, but there's also safety and security for seniors—everything from elder abuse to ensuring that they are secure from financial abuse; ensuring that we adapt our employment and volunteer sector to accommodate our changing demographics; that the language we use is age-friendly; that our communities change and adapt to make sure that our seniors are fully accommodated.

Obviously, an important part is accommodation, where one lives. That's what this legislation is dealing with, a part of that. For the members' information there are, we believe, approximately 700 retirement homes in the province. When we say "we believe," they are currently not identified, and that's part of what this legislation will do. The estimate is 700 and there are approximately, we believe, 40,000 people who live in these retirement homes. It's an important part of our province.

**0910**

When we think of retirement homes, many of us think of the quality homes that exist in our communities, very



well run, serving our seniors very well. We also recognize that there are some that aren't as well run and some that aren't serving our seniors as well as all of us would like.

I think all members of the Legislature appreciate the important role that seniors have played and continue to play in our province, and the responsibility we have to ensure, to the best of our ability, that when they select a retirement home, they can be confident of the safety and security and the treatment they will receive in that home.

I'm about to turn my opportunity here over to my parliamentary assistant, but I just want to say that I think this proposed act, if passed, will be an important additional milestone in the province of Ontario: the first time we regulate and license retirement homes. It is a solid step forward.

I look forward to the debate—I make the assumption that this bill will move to committee, where the public will have some opportunity, but that will be up to the Legislature to decide—and then to ultimate passage of the bill and, for the first time, as I say, the regulation, licensing and oversight of our retirement home sector.

With that, I'd like to turn the opportunity over to my colleague the member from Brampton West.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Brampton West.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** It's a pleasure to share time today with Minister Phillips, the minister responsible for seniors, and it's with great pride that I'm able to give this very important issue the time it deserves.

As the minister has mentioned, the proposed Retirement Homes Act is about our loved ones. Seniors have a very special place in our lives, whether it's in their role as a mentor, grandparent, parent or friend. We count on their wisdom, experience and advice, and we want nothing more but the very best for them and the 40,000 seniors living in retirement homes today.

If passed, this act would create and protect residents' rights including, among other things, the right to know the true cost of accommodation and the right to live in an environment that promotes zero tolerance of abuse and neglect.

The journey up until this point has been a long one, but I think we can all agree that anything that's worth doing well takes time. We're talking about improving the quality of life for our loved ones, and that means we want to make sure we're doing this right.

The hard-working staff at the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat went across the province in 2007 to talk to more than 800 people in 12 cities about retirement homes. We talked to a lot of seniors, retirement home operators and seniors' advocates. They told us what's working and what's not working, and they discussed expectations.

Here's what people told us during those consultations. One message came through loud and clear over and over again from operators, residents and their families; that is, that the retirement home sector should be regulated. Participants also said we should recognize the range of care services available across the sector.

They told staff that any proposed regulation should not restrict the flexibility of operators to decide which care services to provide, and should not limit seniors' choice about where they live. They also asked to keep the cost of regulation reasonable.

When asked about what the standards should cover, most felt there should be standards for any care service offered by a retirement home operator. More specifically, many participants said there should be standards for infection control and evacuation procedures. Groups in almost every city also felt there should be standards for assessment of residents' care needs to ensure that residents are able to make an informed choice about their care and accommodation.

There was virtually unanimous agreement that restraints should not be permitted in retirement homes but that personal assistance devices, if used properly, would be okay.

Every group was asked who should be responsible for ensuring that care standards are met. Most agreed that enforcement should be handled by a third party—an independent body. Many groups told us that the responsibilities of an independent body should include helping homes meet requirements, inspecting homes, enforcing care standards and dealing with consumer complaints.

We also asked groups about what should happen to homes that don't meet the standards. Most felt that the public had a right to know which homes were not meeting the standards, but only after operators had failed to take the proper steps to correct the problems. They told us that an independent body could and should use a variety of measures to ensure compliance with standards, starting from the least punitive fines, and only after other measures are exhausted should a licence be revoked.

We went away from those consultations, and armed with the insights and recommendations we heard, we went to work. Staff at the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat worked very hard with colleagues in other ministries, from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, to develop legislation that, if passed, would not only ensure informed choice for our seniors but also ensure the viability of an industry that is expected to grow considerably over the next few years.

How will it do this? The proposed bill is split into several parts: fundamental principles and definition of a retirement home; the creation of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority; licensing requirements; residents' rights, care and safety; enforcement; appeals of licensing decisions or orders; and finally, important details such as the creation of regulations and a public register listing all retirement homes, their size, location and inspection results.

The first part is about the fundamental principles that the minister responsible for seniors told us about before. A retirement home is to be operated so that it is a place where residents live with dignity, respect, privacy and autonomy, in security, safety and comfort, and can make



informed choices about their care options. The proposed legislation defines a retirement home as a place that is occupied primarily by a person over the age of 65 who is unrelated to the owner, where there are at least two care services available from a list of 10, and potentially more, through regulations, if we find they are needed. The minimum number of residents would be set at six through regulation so that we would have the flexibility to change this number if necessary.

The proposed legislation would apply to rental accommodations and would not include condos or life leases.

The second part of the proposed act would establish the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority. This authority would be responsible for licensing homes, educating operators and staff, and ensuring compliance through issuing orders and revoking licences, if necessary. Specifically, this part would establish the board of directors' qualifications and reappointment; define the mandate of the authority; provide the ability to set and collect fees, and to use these funds collected to carry out the mandate of the authority; create the positions of registrar, risk officer and complaints review officer within the authority and outline their responsibilities; require the authority to establish a code of ethics; and establish an emergency fund.

The next section includes licensing requirements for all retirement homes. No retirement home would be able to operate in Ontario without a licence granted by the registrar. This part of the proposed act would also set out the following process for licensing requirements: eligibility criteria; the registrar's powers, including the ability to make inquiries, conduct investigations and inspections, grant and refuse a licence, and impose conditions on those licences; the process for granting, refusing or placing conditions on a licence; and all reasonable costs associated with the registrar's investigation or inspection to be paid by the applicant.

The proposed Retirement Homes Act would establish residents' rights that would be fully respected and promoted by the licensees of any retirement home in Ontario. The following protections would be included: the right to clear information about the contents of a resident's contract with the retirement home, specifically the different types of accommodation and care services provided in the home and their costs; the right to an individualized plan of care based on an assessment of a resident's needs; the right to contract with external care providers if residents so choose; and the right to know about the protections available to residents, including the home's complaints process and whistle-blowing protections. Licensees would be required to comply with care and safety standards, which would be set out in regulation.

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We're looking at several approaches to the development of standards to ensure we come up with the best fit for Ontario. We would work with industry partners and seniors' groups to ensure the standards address the broad range of care needs of residents; these standards are

workable in Ontario's retirement home sector; and they allow for more informed decision-making, safety and consistency across all retirement homes.

A possible care standard could involve extra training for front-line staff on abuse recognition and prevention and mental health issues, including caring for persons with dementia, behaviour management and the use of personal assistance devices. It could include setting maximum limits for the temperature of bath water.

Safety standards could detail requirements such as specific skills and training for staff in dealing with emergency and evacuation procedures. They could include certain requirements for infection prevention and control programs or a written policy to promote zero tolerance of abuse and neglect of residents.

All retirement homes would be required to develop a plan of care for every resident upon entering a home. This plan would need to be reviewed at least every six months, based on an assessment of a resident's care needs, and would require a resident's full participation and permission.

The next section of the proposed act also spells out the following protections:

**Zero tolerance of abuse and neglect:** Licensees would be required to protect residents from abuse by anyone and ensure that residents are not neglected by staff. Licensees would be required to develop a written policy on zero tolerance of abuse and neglect.

**An absolute prohibition on the use of restraints:** The prohibition would not apply to the common-law duty to restrain a person when there is imminent harm possible to the person or others. Every licensee would need to keep records about how often this common-law duty has been used.

Licensees would only be permitted to use personal assistance devices if they are included in a resident's plan of care; for example, temporary supports to help keep a person upright. The use of these devices would have to be considered by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker and used according to the manufacturer's operating instructions.

Licensees would have to ensure that staff do not confine a resident to a secure unit unless certain rules set out by the act are met. For example, the use of confinement would have to be outlined in the resident's plan of care and consented to by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker. Residents would also have the right to contact a rights adviser on these situations.

Licensees would have to establish a residents' council if requested by the residents of the retirement home. Licensees would have to provide an assistant to support the council, respond to items raised by the council and not interfere with the council's operations.

Licensees would be required to screen staff and volunteers and ensure they receive minimum training in areas such as care and safety.

I'm very proud to say that improved fire safety is another important protection we're reinforcing in our proposed act. We recognize the importance of the build-



ing and fire codes as the primary source for fire safety, so our proposed act would require every retirement home to comply with all existing fire and safety requirements under those codes. If this legislation passes, we would, for the first time, have a public listing of retirement homes that would include information on whether they have sprinklers. This information would support people in their choice of retirement home, and help our fire and police services know more about the retirement homes in their communities.

It's worth noting that sprinklers are just one of many tools we can use in addressing fire safety. In fact, a recent letter from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association states that sprinklers "are not a magic bullet." The letter goes on to say that "all factors must be considered, from existing code compliances to implementing approved fire safety plans to proper emergency response capabilities."

This legislation, if passed, would require all homes to have specific evacuation plans for fire and other emergencies. It would also require that all retirement home staff be trained in fire prevention and safety. Further to these measures, retirement homes would be required to include any fire and safety plans in the information packages given to every resident, and an explanation of the measures to be taken in case of a fire would have to be posted in the home. We know that there are particular concerns about fires that occur at night. Our proposed legislation would require that information about nighttime staffing levels also be included in that information package.

These measures would not only give seniors important information about fire safety as they consider retirement home accommodations; they would also reassure residents living in licensed retirement homes that fire and building code requirements have been met, that staff have been trained and that there are emergency and evacuation plans in place.

The next part of this Retirement Homes Act deals with the enforcement powers of the authority's registrar. This includes inspections, the complaints process, different orders that can be made by the registrar and offences under the act.

This section would include: the timing of inspections, including surprise inspections, and the powers of the inspector; the circumstances for when a warrant is required; and the emergency powers available to the inspector when faced with extenuating circumstances.

It would also set out the process for complaints to the registrar. In addition to obligating retirement homes to have an internal complaints process for residents, the act would, if passed, give residents, their families or caregivers the right to go directly to the authority's registrar with concerns about care and safety. The registrar would review each complaint and, based on the nature of the complaint, investigate further and take appropriate action or decide to take no action. The registrar would then notify the complainant about the decision. Complainants who are unhappy with the registrar's decision would be

able to write to the complaints review officer to review the process used by the registrar to reach his or her decision. The complaints review officer would ensure that all information was considered in making the decision.

Orders of the registrar would be broken down into various separate categories: a person suspected of operating a retirement home without a licence would be ordered to either apply for a licence or cease operating a retirement home; a licensee who has breached a requirement under the act would be given a compliance order; orders to employ or retain, at the licensee's expense, one or more people to manage or assist in managing the retirement home; orders to pay a financial penalty; and finally, as a last resort, revoking the licence for the retirement home.

Before a revocation order can be made, a notice of intent would first be sent to the licensee to allow the licensee time to respond to the issues raised by the registrar.

I'd now like to talk about how the proposed act deals with the appeals process for anyone served with a licensing decision or a registrar's order. Anyone served with a licensing decision or a registrar's order would be able to appeal the registrar's decision to the Licence Appeal Tribunal. They could also appeal the tribunal's decision to Divisional Court on questions of law.

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There are other general, but key, requirements set out by the act, including:

- creating a public retirement home register by the authority, listing details about the licensed retirement homes, including location, number of residents, inspection results and whether or not they have sprinklers;

- confidentiality clauses to protect information collected by the authority;

- protection for whistle-blowers; and

- regulations for caregivers; different classes of licences, defining what constitutes physical, financial, verbal, emotional or sexual abuse; licensing requirements; and financial penalties, which include the amounts and criteria, and this information to be included in an order for payment; information governing the review by the LAT of the proposed order for payment of an administrative penalty; and regulations leading to how the emergency fund would be used.

There would also be a requirement for a review of the act to be undertaken by the minister within five years of proclamation, and for this review to be tabled in the Legislature.

In conclusion, this proposed act addresses virtually all of the recommendations we heard during our consultations, from requiring care standards for any care service offered by a retirement home, to establishing a third party independent regulatory body to enforce those standards, to creating and protecting residents' rights. Ultimately, this act is about ensuring that Ontario's seniors are able to maintain the independence they hold dear. It's about ensuring they are treated with respect and that they can have peace of mind knowing they are able to make



informed choices about living in any retirement home in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased to respond to Bill 21. At this point, I'm actually anxious to hear from our critic, the member from Cambridge, who has studied the bill and who, I think, has a lot of valid comments. I'm only responding to his remarks in the media with respect to the introduction of this bill, and I think he summed it up quite succinctly when he said that the government is really avoiding the obvious question of the backlog in emergency rooms in our hospitals today.

This is primarily caused by ALC—alternative level of care—patients, who can't be discharged because they have accompanying medical issues, which puts a lot of costs onto the hospitals, and there is a jam-up with the family. What's missing here is a plan for long-term care. In the election they promised—they make a lot of promises, but most of them never come true. The real issue here is that the promise that they were going to create or at least modernize some of the long-term-care facilities in Ontario simply hasn't happened. Unfortunately, the families and the individuals are in a situation that isn't particularly good for them.

The other part of it is that there was the inquest of the 92-year-old woman who died in a retirement home, suggesting that the case there was that she really should have been in a more appropriate setting. I am interested in the remarks, in a few minutes, by our member from Cambridge, who has worked on this and is very familiar with the issues involved.

At the end of the day, I think that vulnerable people were probably in favour of a good part of this bill. I can tell from personal experience that regulation is already happening in my riding. I have power of attorney for my mother-in-law, who fell and couldn't be discharged. Eventually, the hospital wanted the bed, and pretty soon I had to pay for retirement. There is no funding in retirement homes and that's the real issue here. There's no money—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I must say that I have been waiting for the regulation of retirement homes for a long time. The bill was a long time in coming, and I was kind of glad that it finally came out. So this is a little positive step.

I would say that the aim of the bill is what we all want: We want to protect the frail elderly, who make up the great majority of people who live in retirement homes. We want to give them some sort of protection and make sure we protect them from abuse at every level, and the bill aims at doing this.

Unfortunately, there is an ocean between what the goals are and what will actually come out. One of the key pieces of the bill is the establishment of an oversight mechanism. There is nothing in the bill that prevents the oversight mechanism from being dominated by the major

players within the industry. Basically, you would have the owners and representatives of retirement homes policing themselves. This is a system that does not give the frail, the elderly in Ontario the protection they deserve and the protection that the government has set out in this bill to provide, and that brings me great worries. When the introduction by the honourable minister and his parliamentary assistants was laid out—I think they're going in the right direction, but I think the bill needs stronger teeth in order to achieve what they wanted to achieve. At the end of the day, we want the tragedy that happened in Ottawa, where a woman died, the tragedies that are happening right now in retirement homes, to end. This bill is not going to do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I certainly appreciated the comments this morning of the minister without portfolio responsible for seniors in the province of Ontario and indeed his parliamentary assistant. It goes without saying that this legislation, Bill 21, I think is something that will pass this House. I think in many ways it's a non-partisan issue, because we're all very concerned about our elderly citizens in the province of Ontario. Many of them, of course, are veterans. I know the youngest of those World War II veterans are in their mid-80s. I was just recently reading in a Legion publication that in fact 400 to 500 World War II veterans are dying each week now across Canada, because they are a very declining group. And there are others, the people who have made investments in our communities. Those community leaders now find themselves in retirement homes. This piece of legislation will bring about a framework to make sure that a spouse, a loved one, a family member can have confidence in what is taking place in our retirement homes across the province of Ontario.

This piece of legislation is certainly long overdue, and I salute previous ministers for seniors in the province for working on this particular area for a lengthy period of time. Over 800 people have participated in the public consultations, and it would be my view that all parties in this House will work in a very co-operative spirit to make sure that Bill 21 is the very best piece of legislation possible to look after our very fragile citizens in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** This Bill 21, although well-intended, causes me a little bit of concern as I read through it. It's clear, from my reading of it, that the government is confusing long-term-care facilities and retirement homes, and actually maybe creeping and pushing or increasing the role of retirement homes into that of a long-term-care facility. Listening to the member speaking, talking about frail elderly people and war veterans etc., not everybody—I would put this position forward: People who go to retirement homes are actually independent living members of society, residents. They're going to a retirement home. They fully have their facul-



ties and are competent and capable of living independently. This bill is transposing that view that everybody who goes to a retirement home is in need of government oversight and care.

I think the member from Durham hit it on the head here. Is this the result of this government not providing adequate resources in the long-term-care facilities? Are they not building enough beds for long-term care and alternative levels of care and therefore now trying to impose long-term-care requirements in the retirement field? If you look at what a resident retirement home is in the act, it really opens it up to any apartment building of more than six units that would fall under this act.

I really would like the government to reconsider and take another look at this bill and how it's going to affect—

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**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Response? The minister without portfolio and responsible for seniors.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I appreciate the comments from my colleagues here.

To the member from Nickel Belt: She makes a reasonable point on the oversight body. Her concern, I think, was that it not be dominated by the industry spokespeople. I think I can reassure her on that. Firstly, the chair would be appointed by the government, so we have control on that. We would appoint not a majority of the board members but a significant number of the board members. We have told the industry that we're looking for board members who understand the industry but are not there representing the industry. As we go through the debate, I hope she'll feel confident that the regulatory body will be representing the interests of the residents pretty clearly.

I appreciate the comments from my colleague from Peterborough that this is about finding ways that we provide accommodation with confidence for our seniors.

To the members for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington—my apologies; it's a long one—and Durham: They both made the same point, I think. We are responding here to province-wide consultations from people who are residents of retirement homes, seniors' organizations and industry.

This is about retirement homes. I'm happy to debate long-term-care homes and what we've done there. I think we've added at least 8,000 new beds there. But this is about retirement homes and responding to the consultations—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I'm pleased to rise today to discuss Bill 21, a bill with some 127 clauses dealing with upgrading the retirement home field, which at the present time has no licensing and little in the way of regulation other than that dealing with the physical surroundings under municipal bylaws.

In order to discuss retirement homes, we have to discuss how we are going to treat our seniors in the future. I,

like the honourable minister, happen to be a senior but that doesn't change things. We are both, I believe, intent on ensuring that our seniors live comfortable, capable lives and are treated with respect.

However, we have to define what we're dealing with. Retirement homes at the present time are basically unregulated. This act, for the first time, will regulate them by the provincial government, and that is a good thing.

This is a private enterprise, or non-profit enterprise, dealing with retirement homes. There are approximately 43,000 residents in retirement homes in the province of Ontario. The homes receive nothing in the way of assistance from this government. They are totally separate from this government. They do not receive any funds from this government for caring for their seniors.

So who pays for it? Well, the seniors do. The seniors pay for not only the rent and the food, but they pay for every single service. Those services that are the most important when you're dealing with a senior are personal services.

Now, let's turn for a moment to long-term-care facilities. They are very similar, if you look at the plan, to retirement homes except that they do receive a subsidy—it could be as high as \$40,000 per resident—and that money is allocated for their personal care. It's a very expensive project. Here we have long-term-care residents whose homes or residences receive \$40,000 per resident in subsidies from this government, and we have retirement homes that receive nothing in the way of subsidies from this government. So when the retirement homes talk about personal care, that is all going to be borne by the resident.

There's nothing wrong with that. We can have two standards: long-term-care facilities and retirement homes. The only problem would seem to be the negligence of this government in establishing more long-term-care beds that will be required for the seniors in this province. As the minister said, in a short 10 years, our seniors are going to double. We have just seen the beginning of the baby boomers starting to retire and starting to require greater service in their advancing years.

What's happening in the long-term-care-facility world? I could discuss that for hours, but I chose an article by Christina Blizzard of the Toronto Sun which, I think, gives the flavour of what's going on in long-term care.

"It's barbaric. Imagine asking a family to put their frail, 89-year-old mom with failing eyesight into a home almost three hours away from her family, her friends, her doctors and her support system.

"Yet that's the devastating choice that's being offered Maureen Cross in the northwestern Ontario town of Kenora.

"After surgery in Winnipeg, Cross's mother, Bernice, decided she could no longer live alone and needed to be in long-term care.

"She was not in any shape to go anywhere except there," Cross said in a telephone interview.

"She feared being by herself."

"Imagine the shock she got when she was told by the community care access centre ... that her mother would



have to go to a home in Fort Frances, a two-and-a-half-hour drive from her home.

"She's not alone. Right across the province, alternate level of care ... patients—those who are chronically ill and need long-term care—are being told they can't stay in hospital and must move to a long-term facility that may be hours from friends and family.

"Kenora-Rainy River MPP Howard Hampton says" the LHINs "are being told to get chronically ill patients out of hospitals and into long-term facilities.

"Without enough beds, though, patients are being forced into neighbouring communities, or wherever a vacancy occurs.

"New Democrat health critic France Gélinas says she's been dealing with this issue in her Nickel Belt riding for the past five years. Now it's spreading across the province."

It's happening in Cambridge; it's happening in our region. We have, as I understand it, about 36 individuals, seniors, who now call the Cambridge Memorial Hospital their home—their home, ladies and gentlemen.

Members, a hospital is not a home; it is a place where one goes when one is ill. But they are there. They call it their home now because there is no place for them to go.

"When a hospital gets too backed up with ALC patients, it asks for a 1-A classification, meaning it gets priority to transfer the patient to the first available long-term-care facility, no matter where it is.

"That's causing heartbreak, with husbands and wives being split up."

In my short tenure as an MPP, I've had at least two cases where husbands and wives were in fact split up. If you can imagine individuals who have lived together—in matrimonial bliss, we all like to think—for many, many years, and now they are sent to separate cities. Now, they were corrected by the community care access centre in our area. However, it did occur and it lasted for months.

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"The irony in Kenora is there are 20 beds available in a home for the aged. They just don't have the funding to open them, Hampton reports.

"This is disgraceful.

"In many ways we have a wonderful health system. We have skilled doctors and caring nurses who go the extra mile for patients.

"Sadly, to access that care, patients often have to negotiate a bureaucratic nightmare of red tape.

"The government has downloaded responsibility for health spending to these faceless LHINs"—and now I am afraid that they are going to be downloading the costs of taking care of our aged in retirement homes by privatizing our health care system.

"At the very time when our parents and grandparents most need their loved ones around them, they are shipped off to an unfamiliar place to die among strangers.

"People who have lived and worked all their lives in communities like these should be allowed the dignity of being cared [for] close to the family, close to those who love them, in their final days.

"This is a heartless bureaucracy gone crazy. You can't ship frail old people out of town just so you can balance the books."

Unfortunately, I believe that's what's happening in our long-term-care facilities, and to find out what this government is doing is very difficult. We've been trying now for a few weeks, and it's most difficult. So, like the public, let's find out what the government is doing.

I went to the website of the Minister of Health, and it says on the website at the present time, "As of February 14, 2008, the following beds have opened since October 2003"—which is the date of the election of the McGuinty government. It's headed, "7,712—new"—7,712 beds have opened. What does that mean? Notice the careful word "opened"—not tendered, not approved, not subsidized, not built by the government, but opened. Most of those beds, quite frankly, were part of a program of the former government to build 20,000 new beds in this province; of course, not all of them were built, but they were all tendered. So there was no further tendering required, there were no further approvals required, and most of those 7,712 beds were, in fact, a slop over of part of those 20,000 beds.

This government did redevelop 8,958, which is a good thing; that's great. Some of them needed redevelopment, and that was done. Unfortunately, it does not add to the number of new beds, though I certainly applaud the government for redeveloping these beds.

Then it says, "In the summer 2007"—coincidentally, by the way, with the upcoming election, which I guess was in 2007, the last one—wow: 2,412 new beds. We're talking about 76,000 beds outstanding in the province of Ontario, and this government, for the first time after four years in office, is planing to build 2,412 beds. Wow. They went to all the openings with the bells and whistles, and they cut the ribbons because they had nothing to do with it. They did not approve those beds. They did not subsidize those beds in any way. The building of them—they did not get a building permit. They didn't tender them—that was already done. All they did was cut the ribbon, and on their website they say they've opened 8,800 beds. I don't even know whether they've opened up the 2,412 they planned in 2007.

We are having difficulty finding information, but if we go to the secretariat of seniors to find out what's going on, I think—it's much more honest, if I may put it that way, and knowing the minister, I can understand why.

It says that since 2003 the government has redeveloped 8,032 beds—which is close to the 8,958 redeveloped, according to the Minister of Health—and will be opening an additional 1,942 beds over the next few years. That's great. It's a pretty paltry amount of beds, considering we have all of these people piling up in our hospitals. What disrespect.

Our seniors have worked in this country. They have built our wealth, they have raised we who sit in this House, and we make them live in a hospital and call the hospital their home. That is not respect. Maybe we didn't



intend it, but it is not respect from any member of this Legislature.

What is happening? I think the following beds have been open since October, the 7,712. We know that maybe 1,900 of those were approved in some way by this government, but I don't think so. This reference in the secretariat website doesn't mention one new bed, except that there are plans to build 1,942 new beds, which I don't understand because it says in the—what confusion; what confusion between two silos of our government. They don't know what the right hand and the left hand are doing.

It definitely says—this is the Ministry of Health—that in the summer of 2007, 2,412 new long-term beds were awarded to meet the growing demand in key communities across the province. If there were beds being built in long-term-care facilities by this government, then by their own website, it looks like it's something in the order of a maximum of 4,000. Considering they've been elected twice now, that's eight years. So they've possibly built that amount, which, if I take a look at the arithmetic—and I'm not good at arithmetic—76,000 beds presently exist, and those beds, well, that's less than 4%.

How are we possibly going to give our long-term-care people, our seniors, who we know are going to double—how is this Legislature going to care for these people if we're not building long-term-care facilities, which cost this government \$40,000 a bed per year? Where are these people going to go? Can we leave them in the hospital? A hospital is not a home. I think we all agree that they shouldn't be in a hospital—plus it's extremely expensive for them to reside in the hospital with all the hospital services and take up a bed that is needed for individuals in the acute care process.

So where are they going to go? Are their kids going to take care of them? Possibly. Can they stay in their homes? That's the best alternative of all. And this government has started a program—I don't agree that it's strong enough or large enough. However, they have recognized that the best place for a senior is in their home. So if they can't be in their home and they need care, where are they going to go?

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The long-term-care facilities are full. So, in effect, the government has put a cap on their spending for long-term-care facilities: \$40,000 a bed, and that is for the present 76,000 beds, and if we don't increase that, then they put a cap on that. And let the rest of them go to a privatized retirement home. So we can see what is happening. The seniors who are looking for a place where they can receive care are now going to be moved to private enterprise, and they are going to pay.

We know that many of our seniors unfortunately do not even have pensions. I think 70% of the residents of Ontario are not involved in a pension plan, including the members of this Legislature, by the way, who voted to do away with our pensions in 1995.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Who the heck thought of that idea?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** Yes. I must say, unfortunately—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Don't you have a pension?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, we do. We have one. It's called a defined contribution plan.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** We won't get into that, but I must admit I have made some bad mistakes in my life, and that happens to be one of them.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Way to go, Gerry.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** So where are we? We're going to be cut off early today and I'll have to continue tomorrow or the next day, whenever the government chooses to schedule it.

The question is, if we're going to get this enormous shift of our seniors—our seniors say they cannot take care of themselves. There are seniors who require personal care. Where are they going to go? This government says, "I don't think you're going to come to a long-term-care facility because we're not building any anymore, or if we are, they're just minute amounts."

So where in heaven's name are the seniors in need going to go? They're going to have to go to a retirement home, and that is why this bill is presented at this time. The need is there. Everybody admits it. Double the seniors in a short 10-year period, a decade, and they will not have a place to live, so they're going to have to go into retirement homes.

We're building up a mini long-term-care facility. It's becoming the same because services will be offered. They'll be able to bring in services from outside. However, it is going to be at their dollar, and if they don't have their dollar, I don't know who is going to take care of them. I guess they can apply for social assistance. They have their Canada pension, but that's all going to be taken away. And the services, again—are we really going to save any money? I don't know, but we certainly are going to cap the money that we are spending in the amount of \$40,000 a bed, because if we don't build these long-term-care facilities, if we don't build these beds, then the \$40,000 is not spent, so that will be a saving.

And, boy, to save money by privatizing our health care system—there are other ways. This government—no wonder it is scrambling to introduce the harmonized tax. It's scrambling for bucks, because it is in a corner. They have spent without reason over the past few years. They've increased the number of civil servants. They've increased the spending, and they don't know where the money is coming from.

We've been saying for seven years that this government has no plan, and it doesn't. Ad hoc, it's now starting to scramble to save money, and this retirement bill, though a good bill on its own—if they were building long-term-care facilities, I would be standing here with a flag and saying, "This is the best bill this government has ever presented to this House. We're going to look at the details, and we're going to vote for it wholeheartedly."

*Interjection:* "However...."

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** However, what is the motive of this government? Do they really care about taking care



of our seniors in need? They haven't shown that in the past, by their lack of building of long-term-care facilities. They just haven't shown it. All of a sudden, eureka. They have been struck by lightning and they see the light. They realize that in only 10 short years, a decade, we are going to double our seniors.

Where are they going to live? Where am I going to live when I turn 80 to 85? Where is the minister going to live? We've got some seniors in our caucus, and we have some seniors across the—where are they going to live? Do they have enough money? They don't have a pension plan; I can tell you that. Are they going to be on social assistance?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Some of them have pensions. I can tell you that right now.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** If they came from former professions, possibly they have them.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** We need a little order here. There's more talking going on from my side. I can hardly hear myself think.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** We're helping you out.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** Please. Either listen or leave.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** You'd better not say that. We're listening. We're listening.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I made my position clear: that this bill puts us on the slippery slope to privatized health care. We are shifting our future seniors' population from a government-run, subsidized long-term-care facility to a privatized, not-government-run—it is going to be governed by a self-governing body. It's not going to be governed by this government. As a matter of fact, on that self-governing body, a majority of the people, the directors, will have to come from the industry. That's right in the act. A majority of individuals will come from industry, not government appointees who are looking out for the public.

There's no doubt that this is privatization. The regulating of retirement homes tells me this government has no plan to invest in new long-term-care facilities and is abandoning the needs of seniors.

As I've already read to you from the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, it says that they will be opening an additional 1,942—this is a promise made by that famous individual Premier McGuinty. I can't recall him keeping a promise. But his promise is—listen; this is big news. We're going to have a doubling of seniors within 10 years, and Premier McGuinty is going to build an additional 1,942 new long-term-care beds over the next few years. Can you imagine?

Well, you know, I have now been the member for Cambridge for approximately 14 years. For the last six or seven years, the minister or the Premier have arrived in my riding, or in the region of Waterloo, and when asked, "When will the extension of Cambridge Memorial happen? When will it be built?" the answer is always the same. It's wonderful.

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**Mr. John O'Toole:** Never.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** No, no, it's more clever than that: "It's not a question of its need, it's just a question of when." Well, that's an answer. It's a favourable answer, too. It tells me that sometime down the road, Cambridge Memorial Hospital will have an expansion which, way back in 1996, a health commission recognized as necessary because it's a fast-growing community.

**Interjection:** Who was the Premier then?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** It wasn't built under Premier Harris. But I must admit that this Premier, Premier McGuinty, has promised to build it, because it's not a question of why or whether it's needed. It's going to be built; the only question is when.

Well, listen to this: There will be "an additional 1,942 more beds over the next few years." By golly. How many years is that? What's "the next few years"? Does that mean it's going to be built next year, 1,900 beds? Two years from now, five years, 10 years? That's about as loosey-goosey as you can go, and those are the kinds of answers that we get. This government rules by announcements. It never gets things done, it just makes announcements—

**Interjection:** And promises.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** And of course promises. The papers pick it up, especially their favourite paper, that they leak all the information to and then it has to repay those favours. They just leak all this stuff, they make promises and announcements, and there never seems to be a completion or execution of those promises.

Hey, some people would say that's clever; it's almost Machiavellian. And it does happen. It works for a little while, because the people of Ontario and Canada are really open. They honestly believe that the Legislatures and the governments are working on their behalf—and for the most part, we are. I've never questioned the motive of any of the individuals in this Legislature, because we are all working for the good of the people of our constituencies and our province. No doubt about it. However, they do expect to see execution of promises. They do expect to see finalization of promises, and that is not occurring. That is one problem we have in our society, where people are looking, to some degree, askance at our politicians. They're saying, "Well, I don't know. They keep promising these things and nothing ever seems to happen." That "next few years"—I don't think it's going to be ready for me, let's put it that way.

To quote the press release posted by this government's website two months ago, "Ontario is rebuilding 4,183 existing beds and updating facilities at 37 long-term-care homes." The number seems to change every time I go through the paper and the websites. These are not new beds; these are existing beds, and you are insulting the seniors of this province by implying that are you in fact looking out for their future needs.

Many seniors in Ontario cannot afford to live at privately owned retirement homes. Rooms at retirement homes cost between \$1,500 and \$5,000 a month—as a



matter of fact, we have one that's more expensive in our riding—and they are not subsidized by any government.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** It is now 10:15 and this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to let everyone know in the House that Bette Jean Crews, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is here—if you'd please stand; Wilma Jeffray, the chair of Ontario Pork; Steve Illick, a director of Ontario Pork; John Gillespie, director, Ontario Cattlemen's Association; Judy Dirksen, the chair of the Ontario Veal Association; and Brian Gilroy, the chair of Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers. Welcome very much to all of you.

I just want to say there's a reception in rooms 228 and 230. All members are welcome, and they're looking forward to the conversation. Thank you for your hard work.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I would like to introduce the parents of page Ahsan Irfan: the grandfather, Taj Rahim; the father, Nadeem Irfan; the mother, Tahira Irfan; and the sister, Aisha Irfan. They are in the east gallery.

**Hon. Mr. Wilkinson:** I'm delighted to introduce to my colleagues my uncle Tom Wilkinson, originally of Montreal, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and now Ottawa, Ontario. He's joined by one of my brothers, Peter. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm very pleased today to introduce to the Legislative Assembly members of the Ontario provincial council of the Catholic Women's League. Visiting with us here and sitting in the members' east lobby, we have Shari Guinta, who is the president; Margaret Ann Jacobs, the past president; Anne Madden, who is the chair of the legislation standing committee; Marlene Pavletic, who is president-elect, and Marlene is from Thunder Bay; and Pauline Krupa, who is the chair of the resolutions standing committee. Pauline is also from Thunder Bay, an old east-ender.

I want to thank the Premier and many of the ministers, who have taken the time to find and accommodate this group for meetings in the last couple of days. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to introduce the grandparents of page Sabina Midgen, grandmother Gloria Midgen and grandfather Sid Midgen, who are here with us today.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'd just like to introduce a good friend of ours, Matt Gibson, who used to work for us here at PC caucus. It's nice to see him in the gallery today.

## POLISH COMMUNITY

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just want to correct the Speaker's record from yesterday. I appreciated the comments that were made in regard to the Polish

community. I think it's important to reinforce that our heartfelt sorrow goes out to the Polish community all across Ontario. For the members' information, the flags will be flying at half-staff here at Queen's Park.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of pages, and ask the pages to assemble for introduction, please.

I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 39th Parliament: Andrew Bacic, Chatham-Kent-Essex; Harry Chen, Willowdale; Mitchell Erickson, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex; Darcy Feagan, Welland; Georgina Hadjiyianni, Pickering-Scarborough East; Kate Hickey, Timmins-James Bay; Aliyana Hirji, Richmond Hill; Ahsan Irfan, Markham-Unionville; Carrington Knight, Hamilton Centre; Zachery Lang, Kenora-Rainy River; Tara Leithead, Etobicoke Centre; Marie Leunissen, London-Fanshawe; Sabina Midgen, Don Valley West; Tudor Mititelu, Ottawa South; Ara Mooradian, Simcoe North; Courtney Mullally, Nickel Belt; Khaleel Rajwani, Scarborough-Agincourt; Kyle Rutherford, Oxford; Max Silverberg, St. Catharines; Owen Singer, St. Paul's; Andrea Strathdee, Perth-Wellington; and Avery Watters, Durham.

Welcome to our pages. I hope you enjoy your session. Please reassume your positions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Premier, sadly, today marks six months since I called on you to hold a full public inquiry into the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle. Sadly, for Ontario families, the Premier continues to ignore this. He won't send in the police to investigate, and now we see the same Liberal-friendly consultants who got rich at eHealth getting rich at the local health integration networks through favourable treatment.

Today, I announced a number of initiatives to improve accountability and transparency in government, including posting online all government contracts for goods and services worth \$10,000 or more. Premier, will you put that into play and will you call for a full eHealth inquiry, or will you do both?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question. I think it's important that we keep in mind some of the facts connected with eHealth. In particular, I want to quote from the Auditor General's report. He said, "We were aware of the allegations that 'party politics' may have entered into the awarding of contracts and that those awarding the contracts may have obtained a personal benefit from the firms getting the work—but we saw no evidence of this during our work."



I just want to take this opportunity to remind my honourable colleague of the specific finding made by the Auditor General, in spite of which my honourable colleague seems to make allegations without foundation

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** We know that the Premier has no intention of revisiting that billion-dollar boondoggle that saw Liberal-friendly consultants get rich and Ontario families get nothing in return. The result is that the same Liberal-friendly consultants are now getting away with untendered contracts and special deals at his LHINs. The Premier has given all kinds of excuses about procurement rules and asterisks and exceptions. We think Ontario families deserve better, and that's why we've brought forward reforms like posting all contracts \$10,000 or over online, expanding freedom-of-information laws to all provincial public bodies, and posting expenses for all employees of those bodies online.

Premier, will you accept these changes so Ontario families can track what you're up to?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The honourable member says that he's in favour of added accountability and transparency, but when we expanded the freedom-of-information legislation to cover OPG and Hydro One, they opposed that. We took it beyond that and expanded it to include universities and Cancer Care. I'm proud to report that our response rate for new requests is now at over 85%, in contrast to 50% with the Conservatives.

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We've also expanded the role of the auditor to conduct value-for-money audits on the broader public sector—for our hospitals for the first time, schools, universities and long-term-care homes.

We have made significant progress when it comes to enhancing accountability and transparency. The question, of course, that goes begging is why my honourable colleague did not support those efforts on our part.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, there is no doubt that the culture of entitlement has set in deep across the McGuinty government. It continues to this day to look the other way when the LHINs are involved in similar scandals as we saw with the eHealth boondoggle.

To date, we have seen some \$3.6 billion in sweetheart deals that have involved Liberal-friendly consultants. If he had adopted these accountability measures, we would not have seen eHealth, we would not have seen the Windsor Energy Centre, we would not have seen this kind of gross severance to HST tax collectors who have not lost a day on the job, the Samsung deal, Cancer Care Ontario or the LHIN scandals, just to name a few.

Premier, these are good proposals. They will let Ontario families be watchdogs over the provincial government. Why do you oppose these good accountability initiatives?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let me speak to some of the other measures that we have put in place, which were opposed by my honourable colleague.

We have in place now a new law in Ontario called the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act. It forces the government to get the Auditor General to sign off on the books before an election so that we can never again have a hidden deficit. My honourable colleagues opposed that legislation. We have a new public service act which provides, for the first time, whistle-blower protection for our workers. My colleagues opposite opposed that as well. And when it comes to expenses, we have in fact tightened the rules for greater transparency around ministers, staff travel and meal expenses. We've also included in that number our 22 biggest agencies and our LHINs because we think that's the right thing to do.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, every time the McGuinty Liberals get their hands caught in the cookie jar, all we see from Dalton McGuinty is a crocodile tear and a commitment to do better.

I don't believe that anybody is beyond redemption. Premier, here is your chance to bring real accountability and transparency measures to bear that will let every Ontario family be a watchdog over government spending. If you had adopted these proposals, we would not have seen Cancer Care Ontario expensing \$75 for cupcakes for a baby shower. We would not have seen your \$2,700-a-day eHealth and LHIN consultants, who expensed at the same time \$3 lattes and muffins, because you would have had to post that proactively for every Ontario taxpayer to see.

Premier, I'll ask you again: Will you adopt these good proposals to improve accountability in provincial government?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the ongoing efforts by my honourable colleague to make something of nothing, to lend the appearance of solidity, as somebody once said, to smoke.

Let me tell you about something else we've done, which my honourable colleagues opposed. They claim that they're in favour of transparency and accountability, but their actions state otherwise. When it comes to salary disclosure, we've expanded the sunshine list to include Hydro One and OPG workers. My honourable colleagues opposed that. We have also put in place new public reporting measures, for example, our wait times website, posted online so people know what's going on in their hospital. We have a patient safety website, where patient safety indicators and death rates are now posted online for the first time. We have a class size tracker. Again, it speaks to our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back the Premier: Premier, you've expanded the sunshine list all right; you've tripled it under your watch in government. It's now at 60,000 people, while Ontario families who pay the bills are left struggling. Ontario families want to know, because be-



hind every government contract and every government expense account is an Ontario family who pays the bill.

Your Liberal friend Steve Mahoney would have had to think twice before he spent \$272 on a GPS to find his way back from his trip to South Carolina. You wouldn't have seen the types of abuse at Cancer Care Ontario that saw contracts with your Liberal friends at Courtyard grow to some \$20 million and 22 secret agreements.

Premier, will you embrace these real reforms based on best practices to give Ontario taxpayers insight into your—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again my honourable colleague stands in opposition to the specific measures we've put in place to heighten accountability and transparency.

I want to make reference to a story that appeared June 4, 2002, in the Tribune: "Former tourism minister Tim Hudak and his staff racked up booze and food bills of more than \$1,000 a month and put taxpayers on the hook for his \$12.25 fishing licence, according to government documents obtained by the Toronto Star." I think that speaks to the—well, it says something interesting about the position adopted by my honourable colleague today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, if you had adopted the—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Members will please come to order. Minister of Economic Development, Minister of Municipal Affairs, the member from Peterborough.

Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, had you adopted the Ontario PC accountability proposals for all public bodies for contracts worth \$10,000, then—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Brant.

Start the clock. Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** —then eHealth would have had to post the \$10 million in sweetheart deals handed out to Liberal-connected Courtyard Group. Cancer Care Ontario would have had to disclose the \$18.7 million they handed out to your friends at the Courtyard Group, and the Toronto Central, Champlain, South East, South West and Mississauga Halton LHINs would have had to post their untendered contracts with Courtyard too.

Premier, why do you stand against our proposal to post these expenses online so Ontario families know—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I want to quote from the same story again: "Hudak and his office staff spent \$23,633.55 on travel, hotels, plants, meals and assorted other expenses, including gum, doughnuts and napkins."

Again I would ask, at a minimum, that my honourable colleague lend his support to the real and necessary

accountability measures that we've already put in place in Ontario.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. In 2007, the Premier committed to building public transit in Toronto and across Ontario, declaring that "the time to make this sort of ambitious but realistic investment is now."

The jobs are still needed. The smog hasn't gone away. Parents are still scrambling to get home in time to feed the kids. Why has the Premier broken his promise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We're proud of what we have been able to do, working with Ontarians, thus far when it comes to investing in public transit. Since 2003, province-wide we have invested \$9.3 billion, which, I believe, is about \$9.3 billion more than the previous government did.

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We have kept the commitment for all our projects. We have, however, adjusted the timetable. I know that my honourable colleague will recognize and understand that we have been struck by this great recession. It does call for some changes in terms of our timetable for making new investments, so we have decided to extend the period over which we will invest in new public transit projects in the city of Toronto and in the GTA. I think that's reasonable and responsible given our circumstances.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In Toronto, light rail transit was going to provide people in some of the city's neediest neighbourhoods a better way to commute to get to work in the morning, to get home earlier to spend more time with their children, to get to school. Why is the Premier betraying these Torontonians and the neighbourhoods that they call home?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My colleague makes a good argument about the importance of investing in public transit. That's why we have made those investments, and that's why we will continue to make those investments.

We've made the largest investment in Toronto public transit in a generation, including the following: \$3.5 billion since 2003 to the city of Toronto; when it comes to the gas tax, \$688 million over the first five years of the program; and \$870 million to extend the TTC subway to York region. We've got two tunnelling machines that have been purchased, and work is under way.

We continue to make significant investments in public transit in the city of Toronto as we speak.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier may deserve some credit from his corporate buddies at SNC-Lavalin. He's moving full-smog ahead with a private diesel train that's going to take well-heeled business travellers from downtown to the airport, but a working parent in Rexdale or Mount Dennis or Malvern is going to have to keep waiting.



Why are the people who most need better public transit the ones most hurt by the Premier's broken promise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I implore my honourable colleague to understand the nature of the financial challenge before us. We can't do everything as quickly as we would like. We never could, but especially as a result of this great recession, we've had to make some changes to our plans. So instead of taking money out of health care, out of schools or out of supports for our vulnerable, we've merely decided to stretch out the investment that we fully intend to continue to make in public transit projects in the city of Toronto. Again, I believe that's reasonable and responsible in the circumstances.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Back to the Premier. Toronto transit riders aren't the only ones getting railroaded by this government. The end of the bus replacement program leaves people in Ottawa, London, Hamilton, Sudbury and Windsor waiting longer. Their buses are aging, and it also is stopping cleaner hybrids from getting on the road.

Why is the Premier's restraint program whacking people who need public transit and want cleaner air?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, it's about making choices. My honourable colleague, through her line of questioning, would convey that somehow we can have it all. I'd love to have it all but we can't.

I can tell you what we have done, again with respect to investing in buses. Since 2003, we've invested over \$700 million for new TTC hybrid buses, subway cars, track repairs and improvements; another over \$400 million for replacements of over 200 streetcars; and we're, of course, also investing in highways and roads along the way.

It's a matter of making choices. It's a matter of making sure we give effect to people's priorities in the greatest way possible. That includes their health care, education, supports for our vulnerable, protection of the environment and continuing investments in our public transit system.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier is leaving people of Ontario without transit choices. That's the point of these questions. For transit to work as an alternative, it needs to actually be affordable. Ottawa transit users just saw their fares jump 8% to \$3.25, and the price of a monthly bus pass in Hamilton is up 22% over the past three years.

Does the Premier think that making transit users pay more is a good way of getting more people out of their cars?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, in an ideal world the cost of public transit would never go up again, but we don't live in that world, we live in this one. I think what we can do is commit ourselves, all of us, to making investments in public transit as quickly as we can and in keeping with our accountability for giving expression to other priorities embraced by the people of Ontario. So we

have found a way, in fact, to continue to invest in health care, to continue to invest in our schools. We've heightened supports for our vulnerable this year. We continue to have in place environmental protections. And the fact is, we continue to invest more in public transit. We just can't invest as quickly as we thought we might prior to the recession, with the fallout effect of that, but again, I think that's responsible in the circumstances.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Let's be clear about where New Democrats stand on transit and where the McGuinty government stands.

On that side, they believe that private diesel trains are more important than light rail. On that side, they're willing to keep polluting buses on the road. On that side, they're willing to let fares rise and rise and rise.

Over here, we support Toronto's Transit City. Over here, we support better, more affordable public transit across Ontario, and we support the jobs that will come with increased public transit investments.

When will the Premier quit making empty promises and just support what we support?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think it was Mario Cuomo, a very successful American politician, who made reference to the poetry of opposition and the prose of government. We necessarily have to work in prose. We've got to deal with the real facts, and the real facts are that we can't do everything we'd like to do as quickly as we'd like, so we've got to make some choices.

I'm proud of the fact that we've found ways to make considerable investments in public transit during the course of the last six years. I'm proud of the new infrastructure that is up and running, the new rolling stock and new tracks and the new roofs that we've put in place.

The fact of the matter is, we've had to make an adjustment, given the consequences of the great recession. We will continue to find ways going forward, working with all our municipal partners, to ensure that those people who wish to avail themselves of good-quality public transit do in fact have access to that and have reason to be hopeful.

### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is for the Premier.

Last year, you announced new rules that you said would stop expense scandals like what happened at OLG and eHealth, but the rules do not apply to the LHINs. How do we know? Because we called the Integrity Commissioner and asked.

So I have a very simple question: Did you leave a loophole in accountability rules so your hand-picked appointees and Liberal-friendly consultants can continue to make Ontario patients cover the lattes, the cupcake parties, the GPSs and other expenses?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think I note a certain line of questioning and a theme developing here. I'm not sure it's in keeping with the highest priorities of the people of Ontario, but of course it's up to the Conservative Party to make their own determination in this regard.



Just to be clear, we have insisted that the people who work for our local health integration networks in fact post their expenses online. I'm not sure my colleagues understand that, but that's a change that we made some time ago.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I think I just heard the Premier of Ontario say that accountability is not an important and pressing issue in the province of Ontario, and that's wrong, because at eHealth, Liberal-friendly consultants at Courtyard were reimbursed thousands of dollars without receipts.

Our freedom-of-information records reveal that the Premier's LHINs are still reimbursing expenses in spite of his new rules. The South West LHIN paid over \$4,000 to Courtyard without receipts. The North West LHIN reimbursed over \$19,000. Others have done the same thing. At eHealth, this sort of abuse cost you a CEO, a chair, a deputy minister and a minister.

If you won't adopt the Ontario PC proposals for greater accountability, then how will you enforce accountability for untendered contracts and consultant expenses at local health integration networks?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm more than happy to discuss the issues you've raised today, but I want to go back to a question you raised yesterday about the reporting of people who are seconded to the LHINs, who are paid by hospitals.

I have done a little bit of homework, and I think the member opposite will be interested in this.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I want to hear questions and answers, and with loud noise in the chamber, I cannot hear those questions and those answers.

Minister?

1100

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The individuals you named yesterday were actually on the sunshine list. We committed to post people who are working for the ministry separately as opposed to in their hospitals, and we did that. All of the people who were mentioned yesterday are highly qualified professionals doing very important work and providing valuable expertise to the LHIN.

In the Waterloo Wellington LHIN, Gloria Whitson-Shea is an employee of the hospital. She's seconded to the LHIN to provide leadership around clinical initiatives that are focused on improving—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** To the Attorney General: Former MP Rahim Jaffer was caught drunk driving and with Lord only knows how much cocaine in his possession, yet he walked away with the serious charges withdrawn

and but a slap on the wrist. Since the matter is no longer before the courts, will the Attorney General tell Ontarians what the justification is for Jaffer's sweetheart plea-bargain deal?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I suppose it's only in the Legislature that questions like that could be asked, which really say things that don't respect the process. We have a trial process in this province, and the trial process applies equally—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Cambridge will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I certainly withdraw it.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The trial process exists for those people whose names we recognize in the same way as it exists for those whose names we don't. Cases only proceed—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will withdraw his comment, please. I have good hearing, even with the noise.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I'll withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No, you need to stand and withdraw it.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I wasn't talking to you, but I withdraw it if you thought it was in your way.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Cases only proceed if they can be proven in court. If they can't, it's the responsibility of those presiding and the crown attorney to take the appropriate action.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The public has every right to know what went on here. People in Ontario see a well-connected individual, a former MP, husband of a high-profile, dare I say it, cabinet minister. They see him blatantly break the law, serious offences like drunk driving and possession of cocaine, and then get off scot-free. It raises troubling questions.

The Attorney General has the opportunity to clear the air here and explain what went on and why those charges were withdrawn. Why won't the Attorney General simply provide that explanation?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I've provided it, as did the crown in court, and as I've answered the questions before.

But what would be interesting is to cast our mind back to when my friend practised in the courts, either in Welland or surrounding jurisdictions. One could imagine what his reaction would have been if somebody asked questions of one of his clients after the case had concluded with the same type of approach that he has taken here today. We would have heard about the sanctity of the process, the fact that people are presumed innocent, the fact that we must respect criminal trials and criminal process, and the fact that the law should apply equally whether you happen to know or don't happen to know, or want to make a statement about somebody or don't. The law applies equally to all and my friend knows that. He is a lawyer and he needs to respect that, with respect.



## PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. My constituency office is getting calls from constituents who are concerned that the pharmacists will be cutting services to make up for the removal of the professional allowances; that is, the rebates paid to pharmacies by generic drug companies to stock products on their shelves. We have heard that both Loblaw and Shoppers Drug Mart are reviewing the drug reforms announced last week, and that possible reductions in patient services could result. We've already heard that Shoppers Drug Mart will be reducing store hours in London, with additional reductions in pharmacy hours—this before any of the government's proposed reforms are actually in place.

Families have a lot of questions about the government's plan on lower drug prices. Could the minister please tell this House what the government is doing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thanks to the member. We are committed to moving to a system that increases access to lower drug costs and to directly funding services to patients in pharmacies. I know that Big Pharmacy is actively opposing this move. Yesterday, I sent a letter to the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, the Canadian Association of Chain Drug Stores and the Independent Pharmacists of Ontario. I asked these groups to confirm that patients will continue to receive the medicines that they need.

I am deeply disappointed that Shoppers Drug Mart announced that they're putting the people of London, my hometown, in the middle of this debate. However, I am very happy that not all pharmacy retailers are following that course. Loblaw, for example, is taking the responsible route and assuring its customers that it's business as usual for all of its Ontario in-store pharmacies.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I appreciate the minister's response. I think that my constituents will be supportive of increasing access to the much-needed drugs and additional services delivered by pharmacists.

In my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, my constituents also have a lot of questions about the government's plan. Pharmacies are a vital hub for patient services. My constituents rely on their local pharmacists to ensure safe and effective use of medications. I know that the Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Association for Retired Persons applaud these changes, saying they will improve access to important drugs.

My constituents need to know how their pharmacies' services will be maintained, especially since they live in a rural area. Could the minister please tell the House and the people of Ontario how these changes will affect rural Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let's remind ourselves why we're making these changes. We're making these changes for patients who need access to medication, we're making these changes for hard-working Ontarians

who are paying too much for generic drugs, and we're making these changes for the taxpayers who deserve a government that will stand up for them when they aren't getting value for money.

Supporting access to pharmacies in rural areas is an integral part of our plan. That's why we're proposing to set up a \$22-million fund to ensure financial support for rural pharmacists: in order to maintain access for patients in rural and underserved communities. We're also increasing the dispensing fees by up to \$4 for pharmacies in rural and underserved areas; that's the dispensing fee we pay as a government. We're doing it because we know how important it is to make sure that people who live in rural Ontario have access to pharmacy services close to home.

## ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Last week, the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition held a town hall meeting to reinforce their urgent need for your support. According to the Stratford Beacon Herald, even your Minister of Revenue says that this government needs to do more for the farmers.

I want to commend the coalition for coming together to speak with one voice on behalf of our farmers; that is their role. Your role, Minister, is to not be a lobbyist but to take action to help them. Will you commit today to reinstate the grains and oilseeds risk management program and to use the new money in the budget towards a broader business risk management program, as the coalition has requested?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to be able to respond to this. First, I want to thank the coalition for coming in today and talking to all the members of this House. I want every member to take the opportunity to have that conversation.

Getting this right is critical for our agricultural community. Our agri-food industry is such an important component within the province, and income stabilization is something that is a critical piece. We recognize that from this side of the House. The previous minister asked the coalition to be formed: all the non-supply-managed sector and all the commodities sitting at the table, working our way through to develop a business plan. We are committed to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Madam Minister, farmers don't need another lobbyist unless it's someone at the cabinet table lobbying your cabinet. They need action. It's not enough to talk about supporting them or to sing about the good things that grow in Ontario.

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You asked farmer organizations to work together, as you mentioned, and they have. You asked them to put forward a proposal, and they have.

I'll ask you once again: Will you answer the question? That's all I'm asking. Will you commit today to reinstate



the grain and oilseeds risk management program and use the new money in the budget towards a broader business risk management program, as the coalition has requested?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I think it's really—this is a critical piece, and we need to make our position quite clear, because the members from across the way did talk about me becoming a lobbyist. I tell you this: I'm prepared to go to our federal government and say that they have always been a part of income stabilization. We want to know, the farmers want to know—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Start the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members will please come to order. I agree with the suggestion that was made yesterday from the honourable member from Oshawa. I think maybe we'll start serving decaffeinated coffee.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, if that decaffeinated coffee was grown in Ontario, we would be very much in favour of it.

One thing I want to go on and say—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I never like to miss an opportunity to stand up for my farmers.

We know that what they want is predictability. They want accountability. They want bankability. They want stability. We recognize—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** When I'm standing, you're to be sitting.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Members, the clock is stopped.

I'm being generous to you right now, because there's as much noise coming from the opposition side as there is from the government.

New question.

#### AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier. Getting local food into Ontario schools and hospitals is a win-win idea. It helps Ontario farmers who are struggling to survive; it improves nutrition for students and patients. A year ago, at the 2009 Premier's summit on agri-food, the Premier promised \$24 million to get more Ontario-grown food into our schools and hospitals.

My question is, one year later, what has happened to the \$24 million that was promised?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Thank you, Premier, and thank you very much for the question.

One of the things that I wanted to make reference to was that, yesterday, we were able to celebrate the sixth

annual Premier's ag summit. One of the things that we talked about was how to increase the capacity of our local food. We recognize that income stabilization is one part of it, but actually increasing the capacity of our local food and working with our processing and how we can do that through Open Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'm looking forward to the supplementary as well, but one of the things I want to talk about is that there are many ways that we can do that. When we look at increasing our capacity, it's getting more of our local food on the shelves; it's also working towards plans from our government as well. That's how we can increase the capacity—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not appropriate.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I apologize.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It would be better if you apologized to the member.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My apologies.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition tells us that another Premier's summit on agri-food has come and gone but not a single penny of the \$24 million that was promised a year ago has in fact been invested or spent. Ontario, in fact, is falling behind states like Illinois and cities like Toronto and Markham, where government-funded bodies are required to buy local and sustainable food to be served. More and more farmers are losing their farms and their livelihoods, yet the \$24 million that was promised is yet to appear.

My question is, will the \$24 million that was promised a year ago finally appear, and will it be used for what it was promised for?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** One of the things that has been very successful is the Buy Local. We see so much of a rebirth, a refresh of our markets that are open, and we see it on the retail shelves as well. We recognize the government purchasing policies. Is there more that we can do? We recognize that. The strategy going forward is being developed.

But let's talk about the good things that have happened: investment of over \$56 million in Buy Local. I can tell you, from my agricultural commodities, that has made a tremendous difference. When we think about the brand recognition of Foodland Ontario, it's 96%. People want to buy that brand. There is more work to do. But let's reflect on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, when our legislation for full-day learning was released earlier in the session, there were a



number of concerns raised by some stakeholders about issues such as the impact on the child care industry and the roles of teachers and ECEs. As you know, yesterday we passed this bill at the Standing Committee on Social Policy. I know some changes are being made to Bill 242.

Can you tell us what you have changed in order to address the concern of our community and the stakeholders, especially our partners in the education system?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm happy that the honourable member asked the question today, because there has been a good deal of feedback from our stakeholders, and from parents particularly, in the province of Ontario as we prepare to introduce Bill 242 for third reading debate.

I want to say that we have been listening very carefully to our stakeholders on the issues that they have brought to us. One of the very key issues, of course, was the ability of third party providers to have a role to play with the initiative as it moves forward. I believe that the legislation will clarify the opportunities that third party providers will have with school boards for programs for six- to 12-year-olds—very, very important.

We understand that we are going to need to provide some flexibility in certain circumstances, and we look forward in regulation—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Minister, my constituents in the riding of London—Fanshawe are looking forward to having their children take part in this exciting program. They understand the benefits that can be provided to their children as a result of participating in full-day learning.

Yesterday, I read an article in the Toronto Star, in which some trustees in some GTA school boards expressed concern about the cost of full-day learning and the funding which our government has provided. The trustees also were concerned that the curriculum for the program is not available. With the next school year coming soon, they feel there may not be enough time to adequately support the program.

Can the minister explain to us how we can address this issue for the trustees, our community and the stakeholders in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** First of all, with regard to the issue around funding, we have committed \$200 million. The legislation has not yet been introduced for third reading, so I would suggest that concerns around what will be required by boards might be a little premature until we have the legislation and the regulations in place. We have set aside \$200 million. In addition to that, we have also committed \$245 million for capital to deliver to school boards to enable them to accept these young students.

With respect to the curriculum, this will be a program that we are working with. We do hope to announce the results of that consultation very soon with the program that we would like to be used as we roll out this very important initiative.

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## TOURISM

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the new Minister of Tourism. Is the minister embarrassed that tourism wasn't mentioned in the throne speech, wasn't mentioned in the budget and isn't even mentioned in the "oops" plan?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you very much for the question. There are challenges in the tourism industry; for example, the high dollar, the border crossings, and also the economy in general. Because of those challenges, my ministry continues to invest in tourism as well as culture. Since 2003, my ministry has invested \$700 million in tourism agencies.

We will continue to invest in tourism as well as culture. Thank you very much for the question.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The minister should be embarrassed. Tourism in Ontario needs a champion, not an apologist.

The latest statistics show that tourism spending in Canada is up, but visits to Ontario are way down, even from last year's poor results. Fewer visitors are coming to Ontario from the US and fewer visitors from overseas. Employment in tourism-related industries is down. The only thing going up in Ontario is taxes. I'm hearing from the industry that the HST this summer will kill tourism.

Will the minister admit that the government has run out of ideas and run out of gas, is running out of time and in 18 months is going to be run out of town by the voters of Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you again for the question. We are proud of the tourism industry in Ontario. We understand those challenges. That's why our government introduced the harmonized sales tax. It will help tourism business. According to the Jack Mintz report, it will attract \$47 billion in investment—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** As well, it will create over 500,000 jobs, according to the report.

We are doing more. We are dividing Ontario into 13 new tourism regions. That will improve and coordinate tourism markets. It will attract more visitors. As well, it will generate more economic impact for this province.

## POVERTY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. There's more and more documented evidence that poverty is on the rise in Ontario. The Hamilton Spectator is currently running a 10-part series on poverty. The indicators in Hamilton are alarming, to say the least. Shockingly, according to the Spectator's research, life expectancy is 21 years lower in Hamilton's low-income neighbourhoods.

The Premier will claim that he has a strategy to reduce poverty. Why is it failing so miserably?



**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The member is asking a good question, because we know that the income of people has an impact on the health of people. That's why, since we came to power, we have been investing in social assistance. This year it's going to be a 12% increase.

We know that there is more to do, and we will continue to do more. For instance, the four- and five-year-old full-day learning at school is huge. It will help to reduce poverty, because we will be able to identify these poor families early and get involved and help them to have a better life condition.

In the supplementary, I will continue to say what we have done so far.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm horrified by the response from the minister. The poverty situation in Hamilton is absolutely dire, and evidence points to the McGuinty government's utter inaction since they came into office.

Province-wide, we have seen a 19% increase in food bank use, a 4.2% increase in people waiting for affordable housing, and a 10% jump in the number of men, women and children living in shelters in communities like Ottawa. Yet six of eight government poverty indicators will not even be available until after the next election.

Is that the Premier's way of intentionally hiding his government's abject failure to improve the lives of Ontario's neediest?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'll refer the question to the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to speak to this critically important issue. First of all, I want to thank the Hamilton Spectator and McMaster University health research faculty member Neil Johnston for the work that they're doing on the Code Red series. It raises important issues, issues that our government has been diligent and aggressive in tackling. We are not scared of tackling issues that are long-standing, province-wide and around the world.

If we want to talk about how this is a cross-government approach to the reduction of poverty, let's talk about \$63.5 million that has been invested in child care. Let's talk about \$200 million—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will please come to order.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Twenty per cent of the people in our area are living below the poverty level. What are you doing about it?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Hamilton—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No. Minister?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Some 35,000 children in nearly 600 schools across Ontario will start all-day junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten this year; an increase in the Ontario child benefit, which is \$1,100 per

child. If we want to focus specifically on Hamilton, listen to these numbers—these are the investments in Hamilton families: \$493,000 in 131 student nutrition centres; \$782,000 in 23 priority schools; \$800,000 in 11 parenting and family literacy centres. That's our commitment to the people of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Yesterday you hosted, along with the Premier, the sixth annual Premier's summit on agri-food. The hard work and dedication in hosting these summits is very much appreciated by members from my own rural community of Chatham–Kent–Essex, as well as by farmers across the province. They put the spotlight on agriculture in this province and allow us to keep track of the progress we have made and the steps we need to take it further as we move forward in helping strengthen the agricultural sector.

Minister, can you please tell this House about some of the highlights from yesterday's Premier's summit on agri-food?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Thank you very much for the question. We recognize the industry's important contribution to our economy and to research and innovation in this province. The summit brought together stakeholders from across Ontario's agri-food industry to create a dialogue on the issues and challenges facing the industry. The Premier's summit provides opportunities for our industry partners to liaison with the Premier, cabinet ministers and other MPPs, and to bring ideas forward to government.

The theme of the 2010 summit was, "Translating consumer demand into market realities." The agenda featured keynote speakers and seminars discussing the many successful partnerships in the industry.

Ontario's farmers and food processors have helped to create a world-class agri-food sector, and they continue to be innovative. By supporting innovative ideas and fostering—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** The Premier's summit, held over the past six years, has provided an excellent opportunity for the agri-food industry from across the province to sit down with our Premier and the minister to discuss the many challenges and opportunities that exist in the agricultural sector in this province. The McGuinty government knows that Ontario farmers make significant contributions to our strong economy through innovation, new market opportunities and value-added products. Our government's on the right track in encouraging innovation in the agri-food sector through the establishment of the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence.

Could the minister provide this House and the farmers in my riding with more information about the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence?



**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** To further foster innovation in the industry, our government established the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence in 2006. That is a \$2.5-million program, and it's to be awarded to outstanding farmer innovators annually, over five years.

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Since the program's inception, over 700 applications have been received, and the Leamington Area Drip Irrigation group received the Premier's Award of \$100,000 for improving water efficiency by constructing a new, 36-kilometre pipeline communal irrigation system for local producers. The system irrigates 2,500 acres of Ontario tomatoes.

Tigchelaar Berry Farms received the Minister's Award of \$50,000 for adopting a new production technique to expand its day-neutral strawberry operations, enabling it to provide fresh Ontario strawberries to consumers for nearly six months of the year.

### TAXATION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is for the Premier. We are now 79 days away from the HST being applied to gas, home heating, fuel and other items that Ontario families rely on every single day. Not only did Andrew Steele, a top Liberal adviser and your former so-called strategic adviser, let on that you will be raising the HST, but my colleague from Thornhill yesterday gave the finance minister the opportunity to deny you would be raising the HST.

He didn't take that opportunity, so we're going to ask you again: Are you going to raise the HST?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** No, we will not be raising the HST.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Start the clock. The members will please come to order; the minister of economic development and the member from Halton, as well.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I wish we could believe, every time Mr. McGuinty said he would not raise our taxes, that he wouldn't. But each day that the HST is closer to kicking in, Ontario families learn a new deal about the McGuinty Liberals and their greedy tax grab. One day, it's that you are using the first \$25 million collected to pay so-called severances to HST tax collectors who are not losing their jobs; the next day, your so-called top Liberal adviser, Andrew Steele, is letting on that you're going to hike the HST the first chance you get.

Today, we learn that the Ontario PCs were right all along about the HST applying to rent. So back to the Premier: Why did you say that the HST would not apply to rent when it will?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Let's be very clear in the province of Ontario: There is no PST or GST applied to rent and there will be no HST applied to rent. That's very

obvious. Again, it's part of a campaign of people who are not telling the entire story. Let's remind people that by filing their income tax return there are millions of Ontarians who are going to receive billions of dollars' worth of transitional payments merely by filling in their tax return, which is due at the end of April.

I know that the members opposite are opposed to some \$3.9 billion worth of transitional payments being made to the people of Ontario, and they are quite surprised when they find out that that party voted against that, as well as \$400 million to our small business owners, whom they purport to represent—but they are opposed to that \$400 million. By filing their tax return, people today will be receiving—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

#### FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre du Revenu. Selon vos propos, l'Ontario met actuellement en place des mesures visant à moderniser son régime fiscal. La pièce maîtresse de cette réforme est la TVH, la taxe de vente harmonisée. Il y a même un site Internet du gouvernement en français avec des clips qui fournissent des renseignements; malheureusement, les cinq clips intitulés TVH 101 sont en anglais. J'en déduis que c'est parce que les Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens seront exemptés de la TVH. Est-ce que j'ai raison?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Merci beaucoup pour la question. I'll answer in English, where I'm much more fluent. I want to say to the member that I appreciate the fact that she has brought this to my attention. I'd be more than happy to discuss that matter with her.

It is very important that the message that we provide in regard to our tax reform is one that is clear and concise and understandable in both of the great official languages of this province. I say to the member that I'd be more than happy to work with her on the issues that she has raised today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ça fait depuis 1986 que la Loi sur les services en français existe. Je ne vois pas pourquoi on a besoin d'attendre longtemps comme ça. Le gouvernement dit que la francophonie est importante, mais leurs actions disent beaucoup plus que leurs paroles. Il est évident que la francophonie n'est pas une priorité pour le gouvernement.

Ce n'est pas seulement les clips en anglais pour la TVH qui me le font dire, mais les libéraux de Dalton McGuinty n'ont pas tenu compte de l'expérience des conseils scolaires de langue française pour la maternelle à temps plein et cherchent à imposer un modèle conçu pour les conseils anglophones. Le gouvernement prononce de belles paroles à l'endroit des francophones, mais agit en sens inverse. La Loi sur les services en français, monsieur, est en vigueur depuis 24 ans.



Pourquoi en 2010 ai-je besoin de vous dire que des vidéos sur un site francophone du gouvernement devraient être en français?

**L'hon. John Wilkinson:** Pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est une très bonne question et un très bon commentaire. Oui, ce n'est pas acceptable qu'il y ait un vidéo seulement en anglais sur le site français. On a fait beaucoup d'améliorations depuis qu'on est arrivé au pouvoir, mais je vois qu'on en a encore à faire. Je vous remercie d'avoir soulevé ça.

Quant aux quatre ans et cinq ans à temps plein : oui, c'est un modèle qui a été calqué sur les conseils scolaires francophones. On est en consultation présentement, et on apprécie beaucoup les commentaires qui sont faits par les francophones, les conseils scolaires francophones, les parents et les garderies. Je suis persuadée que la ministre de l'Éducation va prendre tous ces commentaires-là en considération lorsqu'on va présenter en troisième lecture ce projet de loi.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. With the arrival of this amazing spring weather, many homeowners are planning home renovations. Some are making needed fixes like roof repairs, and some are adding additions to their homes or making cosmetic improvements. I see that many of these renovations are starting right now in Guelph. But I've heard from my constituents and, quite frankly, from family members and friends in other parts of the province that some contractors request and then receive large deposits to do the work, start the work, make a mess, go away and never show up to finish the job.

How should my constituents proceed in order to ensure they get the work that they've actually paid for?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Thank you very much to the member from Guelph. She's a great advocate for consumer protection in her riding. First, I would also like to say that I am sorry that some of your constituents have had to deal with an unfortunate situation, but the Ministry of Consumer Services is here to help. We have a great deal of information to provide to Ontarians to make informed decisions when choosing a contractor to renovate their homes.

It is spring, and we know that a lot of Ontarians will be doing some renovations. What I'd like to do is just offer some helpful hints. First, avoid companies that require large deposits upfront. Second, always get a written contract before the work begins, with the name and the address of the contractor. Third, make sure that all the prices are broken—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** It's good to see that the ministry is available to help consumers with issues like this, including issues with home contractors.

The other issue I've heard in this area from my constituents is that sometimes contractors provide a quote for work to a consumer, but when the work is actually finished, somehow the price is double the original quote.

Minister, what should an Ontarian dealing with this issue do in this situation? What is the recourse that a consumer has when a contractor engages in these practices?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Good question.

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Great question. First, of course, they should call the Ministry of Consumer Services because we are here to help. But what we also do: Contractors that don't abide by the law are subject to penalties, including fines and even jail terms. An individual who is convicted under the Consumer Protection Act, including a contractor, may receive a maximum sentence of two years less a day in jail and maximum fines of up to \$50,000. The Ministry of Consumer Services is here to help, and we encourage people to call us for help.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1140 to 1500.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I would like to introduce Dr. Danny Ghazarian, from Princess Margaret Hospital; Annette Cyr, with her friends Jo-Anne Adams and Terra Mason, all from the Melanoma Network of Canada; and Dr. Cheryl Rosen, representing the Canadian Dermatology Association. They're in the west gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you for the opportunity. I would like to introduce my wife, Carole Shurman, in the west members' gallery.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to introduce Kathleen Perchaluk, from the Canadian Cancer Society, who is here at Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It is my pleasure to introduce Christina Doyle and her husband, Gerry Doyle, in the members' gallery. They're from Richmond Hill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like all members to join me in welcoming to the Speaker's gallery today Lynn Morrison, the Acting Integrity Commissioner, and Valerie Jepson, counsel at the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. Welcome to Queen's Park.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### JACKSON KUHN

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to announce that on March 29, a young man from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Jackson Kuhn, was honoured with the Junior Citizen of the Year Award.



The award is given to a select group of young people who dedicate their time and efforts toward a variety of good causes for their communities that have lasting impacts locally and around the world. These young people demonstrate leadership, determination, passion, initiative, creativity and motivation.

Jackson, who is a resident of Parry Sound, was recognized for his efforts in and around his community. He's an exceptional student, a wonderful athlete and a selfless volunteer. He's also a great motivator of other youth, especially in raising awareness around environmental issues.

The honour was bestowed on Jackson and the other outstanding young people by the Honourable David Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, at a ceremony held here at Queen's Park.

In addition to being a Junior Citizen of the Year and excelling in his studies, Jackson was also the recipient of the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame Top Defenceman Award for 2009.

I want to extend my sincerest congratulations to Jackson and his proud parents, Debbie and Mark Dudas, on this extraordinary achievement. I wish him luck in his future endeavours.

I want to thank the community newspaper association for rewarding these outstanding junior citizens for their fantastic achievements.

#### KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2010

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** I understand I have unanimous consent to wear this sweater for the duration of my statement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** Thank you. It's with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate the town of Dundas on winning CBC's Hockeyville 2010 with over one million votes. Dundas is Hockeyville. It was our community spirit and enthusiasm for hockey that gave them the big win in this competition.

I'm also very pleased to announce that the Dundas Real McCoys just won the Renwick Cup in Thunder Bay and will be travelling next week to represent Ontario in Fort St. John, BC, and competing at the Allan Cup. I wish them well and know they will do us proud.

To everyone who voted for Dundas for Hockeyville, we say a big thank you.

To Barry Forth and his "gotta be Dundas" team, I say: Well done.

Rick Vaive was the first and perhaps the last Toronto Maple Leaf to score 50 goals in three consecutive seasons, and I have his jersey on. But in Dundas we know that Rick's most important hockey years were those he played with the Dundas Real McCoys.

I'm sure all members of this assembly want to join in congratulating Dundas on winning Hockeyville 2010 and in wishing our Dundas Real McCoys, who will represent Ontario in British Columbia, all the best as they battle for the Allan Cup.

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to read one of the postcards I've received from one of my constituents, one of the postcards they've received in support of community pharmacists in my riding.

The postcards are addressed to Dalton McGuinty and they read as follows: "I want to know I can talk to my pharmacist after work, when I can't get to my doctor's office or when my doctor's office is closed. I want to know that my pharmacy will continue to be able to provide valuable health care services in my community."

I'd like to thank the Durham riding pharmacists who have taken the time to keep me informed on the dialogue they've been having with the minister, pharmacists like Neale McLean of Clinic Pharmacy in Bowmanville; Tino Montopoli of Stutt's Pharmacy in Orono, Ontario; George Tadros and Mark Borutskie of IDA Pharmacy in Bowmanville; Doug Brown, Lorraine Watson and Lisa Brown at the Shoppers Drug Marts in Port Perry, Uxbridge and Bowmanville.

The professional allowance this government wants to take away helps keep the doors open at community pharmacies in Ontario. In my opinion, the recent health care changes by the McGuinty government are simply another case of downloading services to people.

I urge this government to listen to patients, the pharmacists and certainly the pharmacy staff and all the stakeholders. We need to find a fair solution that will be good for medicine, good for Ontario and good for the pharmacies of the province of Ontario.

Later this afternoon, I'll be reading a bunch of petitions that I'm receiving. This is a serious issue of restricting access to health care—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRES

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Recently the Ontario government announced \$9 million in funding for 20 children's treatment centres across the province. These centres serve more than 58,000 kids in Ontario every year and provide rehabilitation services to children and youth with moderate to severe disabilities and other special needs.

Lansdowne Children's Centre, in the riding of Brant, will be able to continue and to expand upon the great work that they do, assisting children in need—very helpful to them, their parents and the schools.

Securing the funding for children's treatment centres was a collaborative effort and there are many people I want to acknowledge and thank: Linda Kenny, the CEO of OACRS, who was instrumental throughout the process; Minister Broten, for her commitment to and advocacy for children's issues; Minister Duncan, for finding the funds for this investment; the executive director of Lansdowne Children's Centre, Rita-Marie Hadley, for her communication and passion, along with the entire staff and the board members of Lansdowne Children's Centre; and of course, the Premier, who recognized that investments in these kinds of centres follow the core of



our government's belief in helping those in need and assisting those who need it the most.

A very special thank you to the south-central caucus region, to Minister Bradley, MPP McMeekin, Minister Aggelonitis and MPP Craitor. Thank you to the women's caucus as well.

Thank you to each and every one of the members of this House who know and are very strong supporters of each of these regional treatment centres in Ontario for our children.

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On Saturday, May 15, the sixth annual charity motorcycle ride for Lansdowne Children's Centre will be happening at the Brantford and District Civic Centre.

Finally, in closing, locally, thank you to the Rotary Club and the local sponsors. Most of all, in the entire province of Ontario, I thank the parents for these special children. We heard you; we love you.

#### HIGHWAY SERVICE CENTRES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Last week, we finally heard the government's long-awaited construction announcement of Highway 401 service centres. I still can't understand why they were closed down in the first place without a redevelopment plan in place.

Last September, my riding's two service centres in Mallorytown closed, and the loss of 250 jobs was mind-boggling with no government plan.

The Ministry of Transportation held a public information session in January and clearly heard that the community wanted a staffed, full-service tourist kiosk as part of the Mallorytown plan since they are located between two international bridges. The ministry website still lists the completion date of the Mallorytown service centres as spring 2011, although one of the ministry officials has said that the opening could be delayed. It has been seven months and demolition has not even been completed at these sites. It is ridiculous that the province can't rebuild these stations faster than in 18 months.

The reeve and council of Front of Yonge township want action now and last week passed a resolution giving the government the green light to proceed with construction, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I urge the minister to accelerate reconstruction of these service centres based on the local council's wishes and commit to enhanced tourist service improvements at these sites.

#### TANNING SALONS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure that, in a few minutes, I will be introducing a bill that will stop youth from using tanning salons.

The bill is co-sponsored by the member from London-Fanshawe, who introduced a very similar bill last session. But that bill, like many other ones, died on the order paper when the government prorogued the House.

The body of evidence to support banning tanning salons for youth is mounting. In 2009, the World Health Organization upgraded the classification of UV-emitting

devices—that includes tanning beds—from a probable carcinogen to a known carcinogen, which means that it's not something that we think probably causes cancer; it is something that we know causes cancer.

That's why the cancer society is here today. That's why the Melanoma Network of Canada is here today. That's why physicians from Princess Margaret and the president of the dermatology association are here today. They want to make sure that this bill, this time, will go through.

Ontario wouldn't be leading the way; all of the provinces of Australia, over 32 states in the United States and many countries in Europe already have similar legislation. It will be my pleasure to introduce it in a few minutes.

#### LEADING WOMEN, BUILDING COMMUNITIES AWARD

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** This past Saturday, I had the great honour of recognizing some exceptional women and girls from my riding of Ottawa Centre.

The Leading Women, Building Communities Award recognizes and celebrates women who demonstrate exceptional leadership in working to improve the lives of others in their communities. The Leading Girls Award recognizes the special contribution of young women promoting and demonstrating strong values of equality and participation in their schools and communities.

I want to take this opportunity to name the leading women and girls from the riding of Ottawa Centre who received this award this past Saturday: Caroline Andrew, Bryonie Baxter, Barbara Carroll, Patti Church, Janis Hass, Andrea Dietz, Georgia Dietz, Paulette Dozois, Linda Hoad, Cheryl Parrott, Raghad Ebied, Dr. Safaa Fouda, Jessica Gallant, Isabelle Gareau, Kathleen Gorman, Mary Jessop, Darlene Kelly, Corinne Leduc, Cathy Lewis, Rianne Mahon, Nathalie Maione, Lorrie Marlow, Joy McKinnon, Isabel Metcalfe, Evelyn O'Driscoll, Sana Syed, Nazira Tareen, and Jennifer Whiten.

I congratulate all of them for their exceptional service to our community and for their tireless work in making sure that Ottawa Centre and the broader community of Ottawa are a great place to live for all of us.

#### CHRISTINA DOYLE

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I have the distinct pleasure to rise in this House today to recognize a great constituent of mine, Ms. Christina Doyle of Richmond Hill. Christina is one of four rare bone cancer survivors in all of Canada.

Through her long recovery, Christina has shared her journey and become a motivational speaker. She has been sharing her powerful and uplifting story with thousands of people across the country in hopes to encourage and inspire one's spirit along the way.

This experience has inspired Christina to give back to her community by participating in many charities such as the Terry Fox Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society Relay for Life in Ottawa.



Christina has been telling her story through her motivational CD called *Angels Don't Wear Pyjamas*, with part of the proceeds going to the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation in honour of Dr. Robert S. Bell. As noted by Ms. Maureen McTeer, "This personal journey to renewed life through the pain and fear of cancer will inspire all who hear it."

Christina's tremendous courage and spirit is not only an inspirational story, it is also a true mark of the power of the human mind and body. I wish her all the best and great success in her endeavours.

#### TYLER WILLIAM TODD

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** It is with great sadness that I rise today in the House to remember a dedicated Canadian Forces soldier serving in Afghanistan. Private Tyler William Todd was killed on Sunday by an improvised explosive device while on foot patrol in the Dand district, southwest of Khandahar city. Private Todd served with the First Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He was 26. Born in Kitchener and raised south of Waterloo region on his parents' dairy farm in Bright, Tyler is survived by his parents, Bev and Bryan, and his sisters, Jenna and Samantha.

Prior to volunteering for the Canadian Forces, Private Todd established his commitment to protecting others as a volunteer firefighter for the township of Blandford-Blenheim. In answering his call to volunteer with the Canadian Forces, Private Todd continued a proud family tradition of military service and peacekeeping. As legislators, we're indebted to the brave men and women who put their lives at risk in service to democracy and peace, especially to those who have made the supreme sacrifice such as Private Tyler William Todd.

Our deepest condolences go to the Todd family on the loss of your son. On behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, I ask that each and every one of us take a moment of silence to reflect on the sacrifices made by our soldiers and pay our respects to Private Tyler William Todd, his family and all of the Canadian soldiers who have continued to serve with valour in Afghanistan and throughout the world. May he rest in peace.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd ask all members and guests to please rise as we observe a moment of silence in memory of Private Tyler William Todd.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

**M. Shafiq Qaadri:** Je demande la permission de déposer un rapport du Comité permanent de la politique sociale, et je propose son adoption. I beg leave to present

a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

**The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 242, An Act to amend the Education Act and certain other Acts in relation to early childhood educators, junior kindergarten and kindergarten, extended day programs and certain other matters / *Projet de loi 242, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation et d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la maternelle et le jardin d'enfants, les programmes de jour prolongé et d'autres questions.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

1520

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### SKIN CANCER PREVENTION ACT, 2010

##### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PRÉVENTION DU CANCER DE LA PEAU

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to help prevent skin cancer / *Projet de loi 31, Loi aidant à prévenir le cancer de la peau.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** This bill is co-sponsored by myself and the member from London-Fanshawe. What the bill will do is it prohibits marketing and selling tanning services and ultraviolet light treatment to persons under the age of 19. The bill also requires the establishment and maintenance of a registry related to the use of tanning and ultraviolet equipment, and persons who own or operate an establishment at which tanning services or ultraviolet treatment are provided are required to ensure that persons involved in providing the services or treatment receive training and that signage respecting the health effects of the services or treatment are posted at the establishment where the service or treatments are provided. The bill also makes it an offence to contravene certain provisions of the bill.

This bill has the possibility to save lives and to decrease the cost of health care for the people of Ontario.

##### GREAT LAKES SHORELINE RIGHT OF PASSAGE ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DROIT DE PASSAGE SUR LE LITTORAL DES GRANDS LACS

Mr. Craitor moved first reading of the following bill:



Bill 32, An Act to create a right of passage along the shoreline of the Great Lakes / *Projet de loi 32, Loi créant un droit de passage le long du littoral des Grands Lacs.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I'd like to recognize the hard work of Mr. Garry Skerrett and Mr. Stephen Passero, two concerned citizens from Niagara Falls, with helping to introduce this bill.

The Great Lakes Shoreline Right of Passage Act reserves a right of passage along the shorelines of Ontario's Great Lakes between the shoreline and the high-water mark in accordance with British common law. Essentially, it will allow the public to enjoy the various beaches in our province. It will prohibit adjacent landowners from claiming and barricading beaches by putting up fences way out into the water and claiming the beachfront as their own private property. The bill asserts that these beaches, by tradition and by British common law, are properly the preserve of the public. The right of passage is limited to the right of passage along the shoreline on foot or other non-motorized means and protects adjacent landowners from the noise of motorcycles and other off-road vehicles. It does not allow the public to access the beaches through private property, but it does provide a penalty if the public is improperly blocked.

#### STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING DAY ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA JOURNÉE POUR L'ÉLIMINATION DE LA TRAITE DES PERSONNES

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to proclaim Stop Human Trafficking Day / *Projet de loi 33, Loi proclamant la Journée pour l'élimination de la traite des personnes.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** In respect of my good friend from Welland, the explanatory note: The bill proclaims May 1 in each year as Stop Human Trafficking Day.

#### CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SEMAINE DE LA SENSIBILISATION AU MONOXYDE DE CARBONE

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to proclaim Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week / *Projet de loi 34, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la sensibilisation au monoxyde de carbone.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Very short: This bill proclaims the first week of December in each year as Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It's wonderful when people read the explanatory notes like that.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I will keep up the trend.

#### MADE IN ONTARIO ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR L'IDENTIFICATION DES PRODUITS FAITS EN ONTARIO

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act to require merchandise that is manufactured in Ontario to be identified as such / *Projet de loi 35, Loi exigeant que les marchandises fabriquées en Ontario soient identifiées comme telles.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** The bill requires manufacturers to identify as such merchandise that is manufactured in Ontario. The Made In Ontario Commission is established for the purposes of administering and enforcing the act.

#### MOTIONS

#### INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent for two minutes to be allotted to each recognized party to debate government notice of motion number 3, following which the Speaker shall immediately put all questions necessary to dispose of the motion.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario now assembled, request the appointment of Lynn Morrison as Integrity Commissioner, as provided in section 23 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, chapter 38, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act commencing April 13, 2010.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ms. Smith has moved that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario now assembled, request the appointment of Lynn Morrison as



Integrity Commissioner, as provided in section 23 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, chapter 38, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act commencing April 13, 2010."

Debate?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Really, two minutes does not give us time to do justice to Ms. Morrison and the contributions that she has already made to this province and that we know she will continue to make in her new position as Integrity Commissioner.

She was first appointed Acting Integrity Commissioner on July 31, 2007. Since that time, the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, the member for Beaches–East York and I, the three party designates, have been on a long and circuitous route to find a replacement for our Integrity Commissioner. We have found one today who I think represents all that is right and good in public service in our province and who will certainly do us proud as our Integrity Commissioner.

Since the inception of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner in 1988, Ms. Morrison has served as the executive administrative officer to the Integrity Commissioner for Ontario with responsibility for the Members' Integrity Act, 1994; the former MPP Compensation Reform Act; the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002; and, as of August 20, 2007, parts IV, V and VI of the Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006. In 1999, Ms. Morrison was appointed by the Integrity Commissioner at the time as the delegated lobbyist registrar for Ontario under the Lobbyists Registration Act.

1530

With 30 years of experience in the public service, Ms. Morrison started at the Office of the Integrity Commissioner when the doors opened in the summer of 1988.

Ms. Morrison along with Justice Evans were two of the cofounders of the Canadian Conflict of Interest Commissioners Network in 1992. The CCOIN is an association of provincial and federal integrity and/or conflict-of-interest commissioners. It meets every year. I don't think that I'm overstating it to say that Ms. Morrison is a treasured and widely admired member of the CCOIN. She is often the first call for commissioners across Canada when they encounter novel issues, and her reputation is built on being responsive, helpful and practical.

We here in Ontario share Ms. Morrison with her husband, Bob, and they have two grandchildren, Colwin and Brenner. I know that they are not looking forward to five more busy years, but we are certainly looking forward to working with her.

I've had the privilege over the last two or three years to be working on the revisions to the Members' Integrity Act. She has been a trusted and faithful adviser in that process, and I am certainly joined, I know, by the members of the Liberal caucus in looking forward to working with her for the next five years as our new Integrity Commissioner.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I don't know if that was two minutes or two minutes and a bit.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Two minutes and a bit.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Okay. I want to congratulate, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, Ms. Morrison in her new role as the Integrity Commissioner. When we were interviewing her some time ago, one of the questions I asked her—as you know, she has been serving as the interim Integrity Commissioner—was, "When will you be ready to start?" Well, she's ready to start right away.

I have known Ms. Morrison perhaps better than any other member, save Mr. Kormos. I did meet her in 1988 when she was first working for Judge Evans. She continued to run the office—I mean, no, she helped Judge Evans run the office. Then she had Judge Rutherford and then Judge Osborne. I can say that all of those three Integrity Commissioners were men of tremendous integrity and very, very difficult, when Judge Osborne stepped aside, to replace.

But I'm heartened and I know that all members of the Legislature are heartened to know and to have experienced Ms. Morrison, and that she, in fact, carries the same bent or stripe of integrity that her predecessors have. She has already demonstrated that to us. She not only has that integrity, but she also has the experience of the office. She has worked closely with us—hand in hand—to try to bring improvements to the act, which, no doubt, we will be dealing with in the not-too-far-distant future.

I want to wish her and her staff who will be working with her all the best. We know you're going to do a great job for us. Congratulations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Kenora–Rainy River.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** On behalf of the NDP caucus, I am pleased to support the appointment of Lynn Morrison. I'm pleased to support this appointment for a number of reasons.

First of all, I think we should all recognize that this appointment is being made in the way that it should be. This is a consensus of the Liberal caucus, the Conservative caucus and the NDP caucus. This is a consensus decision involving all three party caucuses in the appointment of this very important officer of the Legislature.

Second, I think we need to recognize that this is someone who has—I don't think the previous speaker misspoke when he said this is someone who has been doing the work, who has exercised the judgment, the knowledge and the good sense that one needs in this kind of position. Ms. Morrison is a person who has demonstrated, I think, for everyone to see, that she is the best candidate for this job, because she's been doing the work.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** And she's not a lawyer.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I also want to acknowledge, as somebody who is still licensed to practise law in Ontario, that she is not a lawyer and not a judge.



I think it is a good precedent to set that someone does not necessarily need to be a judge, a lawyer or a retired judge to exercise knowledge, wisdom and good judgment in this position. So I want to say to Ms. Morrison: Thank you for setting us off on a new track. I think it will be good for all of us to see that you need not necessarily be a lawyer or a judge to be a good Integrity Commissioner.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Congratulations, Lynn Morrison. I'm looking forward to working with you as an officer of this Legislature.

### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in memory of Yom Hashoah, following which a moment of silence will be observed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Yom Hashoah, better known in English as Holocaust Memorial Day, is observed globally by Jews and non-Jews alike. Yom Hashoah commemorates the memory of those who were murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust. Six million innocent Jews lost their lives at the hands of Hitler's Nazi murderers during World War II as part of a diabolical state-sponsored genocide of men, women and children of the Jewish faith.

Noted Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel is fond of saying, "To remain silent and indifferent is the greatest sin of all." By being here today in the Ontario Legislature, we are helping to ensure that none of us forgets what happened to the Jews at the hands of the Nazi cowards, and that our children in the future will know of this horrific period in history.

In his Nobel prize-winning book, *Night*, Wiesel's words are infinitely better than mine in passing on the horrors of the Holocaust. He writes: "Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames, which consumed my faith forever.... Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God himself. Never."

In fact, this Thursday, Elie Wiesel is speaking at Temple Sinai congregation about our obligations as human beings. Wiesel has dedicated his life to ensuring that none of us forget what happened in the Holocaust.

On March 31 in this chamber, the member from Peterborough helped to honour Canadian veteran Ed Carter-Edwards, one of 168 Allied airmen who were incarcerated in Buchenwald in August 1944. Ed and his fellow airmen witnessed first-hand the horrors of

Buchenwald, one of the many dreaded death camps Hitler built.

Ed Carter-Edwards just attended the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Buchenwald on April 9, ensuring that the 56,545 victims lost at Buchenwald are not forgotten or denied. Veterans like Ed Carter-Edwards and thousands of other witnesses all over the world and in Canada have dedicated their lives to telling the stories of the innocent victims of the Holocaust, so that their deaths are not in vain or forgotten.

This past Sunday in Toronto's Earl Bales Park, many of us joined with survivors and their families in the annual community Holocaust commemoration, sponsored by the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem.

1540

The keynote speaker, Judy Weissenberg Cohen, spoke eloquently about the tragic challenges women faced in the Holocaust as mothers, daughters and sisters trying to survive during this horrific time.

Born in Hungary in 1928, Judy survived the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, a slave labour camp and a forced death march. Judy has volunteered her time to educate younger generations about her experience as a survivor of the Holocaust, not only from the perspective of someone of the Jewish faith but also from the perspective of a woman during this horrific period.

As Holocaust survivors stood up on Sunday to read the pledge of survivors, it became evident just how many survivors we fortunately have who live in Ontario and contribute so greatly to the fabric of this great province and country.

Holocaust survivors stood up and vowed to pass on to their children and grandchildren the sacred memory of the six million souls lost. Following their pledge and the lighting of candles, the young children in attendance stood up in honour of more than 1.5 million children who perished in the Holocaust—1.5 million innocent children.

The children at Earl Bales promised to remember and preserve their stories. The countless names etched on the walls of the Holocaust memorial at Earl Bales Park were a sombre reminder to all of us of the millions of lives that were lost and of the extent of suffering they and their families have experienced and are still experiencing. The wall is etched with the names of sisters, brothers, fathers, mothers and grandmothers slaughtered in cold blood by the Nazi killing machines.

It is because of survivors like Judy Weissenberg Cohen, Canadian war veterans like Ed Carter-Edwards and the promise made by our children that we can ensure that these names are not merely names etched on a wall, but that each name, each life, each story will be remembered. Whether it be here in the Legislature or in the Community Holocaust Commemoration ceremonies across this country and across the globe, righteous people from every walk of life are reaffirming their dedication to the six million victims who were slaughtered, so that this



absolutely deplorable chapter in history will never be forgotten and, hopefully, never happen again.

In conclusion, I would like to read from the prayer, For the Martyrs of the Shoah:

“O God, full of mercy, who dwells on high, grant perfect rest on the wings of the divine presence, in the lofty levels of the holy and the pure ones, who shine like the brightness of the firmament, unto the souls of the six million men, women and children, all holy and pure, who were killed, murdered and slaughtered for the sanctification of God’s name, by the hands of the Nazi oppressors and those who aided them, may their names be obliterated. May their resting place be in paradise. May the master of mercy shelter them in the shelter of his wings for eternity; and may he bind their souls in the bond of eternal life. The Lord is their heritage. May they rest in peace. And let us say, Amen.” Amen.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I am privileged to rise today on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize Holocaust Remembrance Day, or Yom Hashoah. This year marks the 67th anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. Commencing last Friday and continuing this week, ceremonies are being held in Ontario and across Canada to commemorate and remember the six million Jews who were slaughtered in the Holocaust.

I also represent the riding of Thornhill, a constituency with the largest Jewish population in any of Ontario’s 107 ridings. Virtually every Jewish family in Thornhill has recorded in its own history the effects of what Hitler called “the final solution” and what we today call the Holocaust. In fact, this could be said of any Jewish family living in Ontario today.

Every individual who is remembered and honoured at this week’s ceremonies was someone’s mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, daughter or son. We mark Holocaust remembrance for these very individuals whose voices have been silenced, whose lives were tragically taken away during this darkest period of modern history.

As their names are read in this week’s ceremonies, we bring these individuals back to life. These ceremonies not only allow us to pause and honour these six million individuals and the families who loved them, but they remind us all of the lessons to be learned from these horrific crimes committed solely out of hatred.

During my attendance at the Yom Hashoah commemoration by TanenbaumCHAT high school students last night at the Shaar Shalom Synagogue in Thornhill, I thought of the extreme and hateful email I received in response to the motion I debated in this House in February on Israeli Apartheid Week, and I thought of the threats made against the member for Parkdale–High Park, who, in supporting my motion, spoke only of peace and justice, and I thought, yes, a society as open and diverse as that of this great province still needs to be reminded of the tragedy of the Holocaust.

In lighting candles yesterday evening to honour the victims, I also thought of my father’s parents. As citizens of Germany, they worked hard and wanted what all of us want: to contribute to society, to raise a family, and to

grow old in peace. While my father fled Nazi Germany and came to Canada, by way of England, as a Jewish refugee, his parents remained behind and became two of the six million lost in Nazi concentration camps—grandparents I never met, whose lives were ended out of hatred. I myself carry the name of my grandfather Emil Schuermann.

I am pleased to see that the lessons learned from the Holocaust were remembered and discussed at a special forum on bringing war criminals to justice hosted yesterday by the Law Society of Upper Canada. Entitled From Nuremberg Forward, the session focused on effective responses to war crimes and Holocaust-era efforts to bring perpetrators to justice.

It is up to us, as members of a free, open and diverse society, to ensure the lessons learned from the Holocaust and other genocides are passed on to future generations. We must always remember that without the freedom and openness that Canada offers to us all, many of us would not be here to remember those six million people who came before us—six million people who were killed in the most heinous crime ever committed against humanity. We must always remember, and we must always say, “Never again.”

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Only a few of us in this House were born into families touched directly by the Holocaust, yet every one of us is invested with an immutable duty and responsibility to contribute to the remembrance of the six million Jews whose lives were taken so brutally and so needlessly.

We in this chamber bear a particular responsibility to serve as custodians of the memory of the Holocaust. As members of a Legislative Assembly in a free country, we’re obliged always to represent as best we can the ideals of equality, inclusion, understanding and respect, and to recognize that the work of building a genuine and lasting peace must be perpetual.

We have a responsibility, too, to remind those inclined to recall the Holocaust solely as a chapter deep in our history that the atrocity of such unthinkable brutality continues to shape the society we all share today. It is our collective fortune that there are Holocaust survivors—men and women who have made incredible contributions to our province—with us still today. They embody a living history of the Holocaust, and their stories of unimaginable suffering and struggle must serve to remind us to do all we can to keep the flame of memory alight.

Our remembrance of the Holocaust must also remind us that to truly honour its many victims, we must not simply engage in the passive act of remembrance, but commit ourselves again to being active participants in building a world where genocide and the events that give rise to it have no hold. That means confronting and staring down discrimination, racism and prejudice wherever we see it and reminding ourselves that baseless discrimination and hate are sadly still present in our communities today.

While the sheer scale of the atrocities of the Holocaust leaves its terrors without comparison, we must remember that genocides have taken place since and that none of us



is excluded from the responsibility of doing all we can to confront and challenge the words and deeds that always precede such senseless hatred and destruction of life.

1550

Recalling the atrocities of the Holocaust is a solemn act, and yet we should also embrace the occasion of this memorial to pay respect and draw strength from the courage, conviction and sheer human will that finally brought an end to the terror and devastation. Ultimately, it was the very best of the human spirit that triumphed over the very worst.

Many survivors of the Holocaust came to Canada and made our communities far stronger by espousing those vital values of compassion, understanding, inclusion and respect. We honour them today.

Today, we recall the atrocity of the Holocaust and stand united in saying, "Never again." We affirm once more that we will never forget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd ask all members to join me as we observe a moment of silence in recognition of the victims of the Holocaust.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## PETITIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** As I said yesterday, I have many of these petitions still coming in. These are about a thousand I have received from Bruce county, mainly over in the Southampton-Port Elgin area. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the blended sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers."

I have signed this.

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulations; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government's plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province's expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water."

I have signed the petition.

### ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

### TAXATION

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and



"Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

"Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

"Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

"Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

"Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers."

I agree with this petition and will sign it and send it to the table with Ahsan.

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly from my constituents from the riding of Durham which reads as follows:

"Whereas the citizens of Ontario depend on the convenient, accessible advice and services provided by their community pharmacies; and

"Whereas Ontarians want to ensure their pharmacists are there when they need them; and

"Whereas patients can talk to their pharmacist after work, when they can't get to their doctor's office or when their doctor's office is closed; and

"Whereas Ontarians [want] assurances that their pharmacy will continue to be able to provide valuable health services to their community;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to please not make cuts to the neighbourhood health care community pharmacies provide."

It's signed by my constituents. I'm pleased to endorse and present it to Tara, one of the pages here at Queen's Park.

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

"Whereas violent crime and gangs have been a problem in our communities; children require safe schools and safe streets in order to thrive;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue with their support of the guns and gangs program;

"To continue to recognize the importance of a strong and educated police force;

"To continue to support rehabilitation programs;

"To continue to keep education as a top priority; and

"To continue to make our streets and schools safe places to be."

I agree with this petition and will give it to page Tudor.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe-Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax ... that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

"Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers."

I agree with the petition and I sign it.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we never want to see another tragedy like Walkerton ever again. The health and safety of Ontarians can never come second to profit and greed. Clean, safe drinking water is a right all Ontarians should be able to enjoy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;

"To continue to monitor and test our water systems;

"To continue to strengthen Ontario's trust in the safety of our drinking water;

"To continue to invest in new systems and personnel to monitor and test our water;

"To never forget the mistakes of the past and always hold our water supply to the highest standard;

"To continue to invest in the health and safety of Ontarians through our water supply."



1600

## TUITION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario have increased by 195% since 1990 and are the third-highest in all of the provinces in Canada;

“Whereas average student debt in Ontario has skyrocketed by 250% in the past 15 years to over \$25,000 for four years of study;

“Whereas international students pay three to four times more for the same education, and domestic students in professional programs such as law and medicine pay as much ... as \$20,000 per year;

“Whereas 70% of new jobs require post-secondary education, and fees reduce” opportunities “for many low- and middle-income families while magnifying barriers for aboriginal, rural, racialized and other marginalized students;

“Whereas Ontario currently provides the lowest per capita funding for post-secondary education in Canada, while many countries fully fund higher education and charge little or no fees for college or university;

“Whereas public opinion polls show that nearly three quarters of Ontarians think the government’s Reaching Higher framework for tuition fee increases of 20% to 36% over four years is unfair;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students’ call to immediately drop tuition fees to 2004 levels and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce a new framework that:

“—reduces tuition and ancillary fees annually for” all “students;

“—converts a portion of every student loan into a grant; and

“—increases per-student funding above the national average.”

I agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

## FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have another petition today.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario’s youth;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

“To continue to make our children a priority for this government;

“To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

“To continue to support Ontario’s families through these initiatives; and

“To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and look forward to their continued growth across the province.”

I agree with this and again give it to Tudor.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to do with the availability of a doctor in the Parry Sound area. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas availability to see a doctor in the Parry Sound district is unacceptable;

“Whereas many residents attempt to call, get on waiting lists and are still not able to see a doctor, ultimately told to go to the emergency department if severe. This situation has deteriorated the last year.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Health require this situation be seriously looked into so that the health care for residents seeing a doctor substantially improves.”

I’m pleased to support this petition.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY CONSUMER  
PROTECTION ACT, 2010LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PROTECTION  
DES CONSOMMATEURS D’ÉNERGIE

Mr. Duguid moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 235, An Act to enact the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts / Projet de loi 235, Loi édictant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des consommateurs d’énergie et modifiant d’autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

*Applause.*

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you to the member for Brant for his support. I’ll be sharing my time with the member for Brant. Maybe that’s why he’s clapping right now. He’s trying to get me to go a little quicker.

I rise to speak today on what is a very important bill to consumers across this province, the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010. But before I move forward with my comments, I want to acknowledge the contribution made to this legislation by the Honourable Gerry Phillips, who was the minister when the legislation was originally introduced, I believe, in December.

We all know Mr. Phillips as a very honourable member in this House, a well-liked, very non-partisan member, measured in his thinking and really talented in finding the balance required in coming forward with good public policy. I think that Mr. Phillips is respected by all members of the House and by the media—by just about everybody in this business—for his long and very



distinguished service in this place and as a minister in both the Peterson government in the 1980s and the McGuinty government over the last couple of terms. I want to thank him for his work on this bill. I want to thank him for all of the work that he has contributed. It's my honour to carry forward the bill that he originally introduced as the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure today.

As I said, this bill was originally introduced this past December. It captured the attention of many when it was introduced. Many members of this Legislature have been very engaged by this piece of legislation and many of our constituents have expressed their views on this legislation as well. I'm very proud of the work, to date, that we've brought to this effort. In fact, I think it illustrates the very vital role that this government can play and that all governments play in improving the lives of people in this province. I'm confident that we've arrived at a piece of legislation that strikes the right balance between creating an environment where business can operate openly and one in which consumers are protected and treated fairly. Really, that pretty much sums up what this bill is all about.

I'd like to acknowledge as well David Ramsay, the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, whose private member's bill highlighted the issue of consumer fairness in the energy retailing sector. He's another distinguished member in this Legislature and another member who is liked by all members of this House. I thank him for his vision early on in bringing forward that private member's bill: another example of how working on and introducing private member's bills—although sometimes it may seem like a long, drawn-out process and sometimes those bills don't in themselves see fruition or the light of day—can sometimes ultimately have a big impact on public policy. Mr. Ramsay deserves much credit from consumers who will benefit from this new legislation, and gratitude from this government for his contribution.

I'd also like to thank Ted McMeekin, the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale, who is here in the Legislature with us today. Last year, as Minister of Consumer Services, he was instrumental in shaping the consumer protections at the heart of this proposed act. Again, we have another member who is not highly partisan in nature, a member who knows how to strike a balance and work with all people on all sides of the Legislature, a distinguished member from the Hamilton area. It's always a pleasure to work with him. He deserves credit for much of what is before us today as well.

Finally, I want to thank the Standing Committee on General Government, all members from all parties, which recently examined this bill and provided insightful and valuable input to strengthen the bill's effectiveness. Your questions and input—by "your" I mean the members of this committee—have helped to clarify the policy intent of this proposed legislation, and many of the proposed amendments that flowed from the work that the committee did have served to improve the legislation. On

behalf of Ontario energy consumers, I really want to thank the committee members for their diligent work.

I want to acknowledge the work as well—and we often don't do this in this Legislature—of the critics on this particular piece of legislation. Parliamentary Assistant Levac has indicated that both Peter Tabuns, the critic and member from Toronto-Danforth, and John Yakabuski, the Conservative member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke who served as critic, both worked very well on this bill. While I don't expect that all members of the House agreed on every aspect of this bill and there was good debate at committee on amendments, potential amendments and different aspects and provisions of the bill, I think that the critics and all members from all sides really recognize that this is a good piece of legislation in the interests of Ontarians and, in a very non-partisan way, have moved forward.

I don't know whether the opposition members will be supporting this bill in the end. Maybe we'll get an inclination today; maybe we won't know until third reading actually takes place. I see the critic Mr. Tabuns nodding his head yes, and I think that's good news. I think it speaks well of the collegial work that the committee was able to accomplish. We really do appreciate the support from Mr. Tabuns on this and the good contribution that he and his colleagues have made to this particular piece of legislation.

1610

I want to speak a little bit about the objective of this legislation, which is really quite simple: to empower consumers, to protect their interests and to ensure that Ontario's energy market is fair and transparent.

Our proposed legislation does this in three main ways. First, it includes measures to crack down on the unacceptable practices of some—and I say some, not all—electricity retailers and gas marketers. Each week, the Ontario Energy Board averages between 100 and 150 consumer complaints about the practices of gas marketers and electricity retailers. That's worth repeating: That's 100 to 150 complaints that the Ontario Energy Board averages every single week. That's a lot of complaints. It means that there is an issue here, an issue that had to be dealt with and an issue that the committee and our government had to tackle.

We've all heard the stories. We've heard them from constituents, about how difficult it can be to understand the energy market. I recognize that as the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure who has been in the job for two months. It's a whole new world out there. It's a whole new set of languages. There are acronyms all over the place. This is a complex energy sector that we work in, and it is difficult for consumers, I think, to understand the energy market.

The pressure that has been exerted by some electricity retailers and gas marketers is a problem. It has been a problem in the past as well. They call and turn up at the door, offering multi-year, fixed-rate contracts for energy. It's that pressure that consumers sometimes find themselves under that may well have led, at times, to con-



sumers making decisions that may not have been in their best interests, or they may have been making decisions when all the information wasn't before them. Some of us have probably experienced some of those experiences ourselves.

This proposed legislation would help consumers deal with that pressure by enabling new requirements, regulations and training standards that would root out unprofessional behaviour. It would also make the energy market easier to understand by ensuring that consumers have every opportunity to fully understand what they're buying.

I think that's the key. It's a free market out there and people have the opportunity to do business. They have the opportunity to market their products and their services. I don't think anybody in this Legislature would have a qualm with that, but it's important that consumers have the ability to understand what it is that they're buying when they are making these kind of purchases.

This would include requirements for the use of plain language to explain the key terms of energy contracts to help consumers more easily understand what they're buying, at what cost and over what period of time—really, what they're committing to do—as well as new regulatory power that would help extend and clarify the conditions under which contracts can be cancelled.

In short, this proposed legislation makes sure that the consumer has every opportunity to understand the offers they're being presented with and to make sure that retailers understand that they are obligated to present their offers clearly and fairly. I think it's reasonable. I think that's fair. I think it's something that consumers would expect, and I think that's one of the reasons why all members of this Legislature are providing some level of support to the approach.

Secondly, this proposed legislation sets out clear rules and strengthens protections for people who live in multi-unit residential buildings where suite metering is possible. This is metering and billing each individual unit individually for electricity. This is something that has been somewhat of a bone of contention for a very long time in the energy conservation world. It's something that we've been trying to strike the balance in for a very long time.

This suite metering has the potential to contribute to the overall drive to build a lasting conservation movement in this province, and that's something I think all of us in this Legislature would support. I think that's something that's very important, because this isn't just about passing laws; this is about allowing our generation of Ontarians to seize this opportunity to build a better future for our kids and our grandkids. This conservation movement, and it is a movement, is something that each and every one of us should be enthusiastic about. When I say each and every one of us, I don't just mean members of the government or members of this Legislature; I mean each and every Ontarian has to seize this opportunity to make life better for our kids and grandkids. If we do not seize this conservation opportunity, we will not be

passing them a planet that has clean air and a clean environment for them to have the same quality of life that we've enjoyed in our lives.

This is something that's very, very important, because experience has shown that if you live in a multi-unit residential building, your electricity use will drop by 12% to 22% if you are paying for your own electricity. What that means for the people listening out there is that if you have your own individual apartment unit and you're being charged unit-by-unit on the usage that you're incurring yourself, it provides an extra incentive to you as an individual to try to conserve. It also provides an opportunity for you as an individual to try to save some money by taking advantage of some of the conservation opportunities that exist. There's no question, for instance, that if you turn up your air conditioner a little too much, you're going to see the effect of that on your electricity bill, so it absolutely makes sense for people who have the ability to control their own electricity use, whether they live in residences they own or residences they rent, and in so doing, to benefit directly from their own conservation efforts. However, in rental situations, it's important as well that tenants in existing buildings know there are clear rules and protections around the introduction of suite metering. It's only fair.

I believe that this proposed legislation, again, strikes the right balance between protecting the rights of tenants, ensuring transparency and contributing to the culture of energy conservation we are building. In the case of existing tenants, a change in the tenancy agreement to shift responsibility for energy from a landlord to a tenant would, under the bill, require the tenant's explicit consent. This proposed legislation would ensure fair rent reductions when tenants take on energy bills, and it would also support the development of minimum energy efficiency guidelines for suite-metered rental apartment buildings, further ensuring that tenants are able to conserve. We need to ensure that we're providing Ontario tenants with access to the tools that can help them lower their electricity use.

If passed, this legislation would ensure that a smooth transition occurs as suite metering becomes the norm in multi-residential buildings cross Ontario. It would enable Ontarians who live in these buildings to make informed decisions about their electricity use and to participate more fully in the conservation movement we're building in this province.

The third and final area of this proposed legislation provides clear authority to the Ontario Energy Board and regulatory power for the government, if it desires, to implement standards with regard to how gas and electricity utilities, including sub-metering companies, set their rules for consumer security deposits and disconnections. Currently, there's quite a variety of different policies used by various energy companies across the province. If passed, this legislation would provide the opportunity to create standard practices. This proposed legislation would allow particular attention to be paid to vulnerable consumers such as those with health and income challenges.



After much debate, discussion and consultation, I believe we have arrived at a piece of legislation that is absolutely fair and balanced. It is fair to the business community, it is fair to the retailers and marketers, and it is fair to the consumer.

If passed, this legislation would create the conditions that will insist that the seller clearly present what they're selling, and it will create the conditions necessary to help the buyer understand what they're purchasing. It's that simple. It will create conditions that will protect Ontario tenants and give them the opportunity to participate in greater energy conservation, and it will create the conditions necessary to help protect Ontario's most vulnerable consumers.

This proposed act is a thoughtful, integrated, comprehensive approach to balancing the rights of consumers with the rights of business to do good business. It ensures fairness and commonality of treatment. It works to eliminate subjectivity and opportunities for exploitation.

Thanks to the input and fine work of many members of this Legislature, of policy experts and of all industry stakeholders, I believe we have arrived at a piece of legislation of which each and every one of us can be proud: a balanced bill that respects the rights of all, protects the most vulnerable, creates a welcoming atmosphere for a legitimate business to operate and supports our broad goals of supporting a generational shift toward greater energy conservation.

1620

I'm very proud to be standing in this Legislature today to speak in support of Bill 235. I believe this legislation is absolutely required. It protects consumers and strengthens Ontario's energy market. It builds on the McGuinty government's record of action with respect to consumer protection and transparent disclosure. I'm very proud to be part of a government that continues to act in the best interests of Ontarians and consumers, and I'd urge all members to support the proposed Energy Consumer Protection Act.

I've had the privilege of working in the world of politics for over 25 years, and I've been elected for 16 or 17 years at different levels of government. I find that one of the privileges of this office is that on many occasions you learn as you go; you learn new things almost every day. I've got to admit that when this legislation first came forward in this Legislature, as introduced by my colleague Gerry Phillips, I kind of had to take a look at it and say: "What is the purpose of retailers in the market? Do they serve a useful place in the energy market? What are they really accomplishing for consumers? Should we be more draconian in moving forward on this legislation? Should we be allowing them to operate at all?"

Well, I think one of the things you do in this business is learn as you go, and that may have been the reaction of many of us on all sides of the House when we heard that 100 to 150 complaints every week are being lodged as a result of some of the practices of some of these retailing companies. But at the end of the day, not all of these companies are engaged in practices that are not in the

interests of consumers. Not each and every one of them is engaged in those practices. In fact, many of them are employing thousands of Ontarians in jobs that would otherwise not be here in this province.

The other thing is that some consumers feel more comfortable having a fixed rate, just like in mortgages. Some consumers, when planning their mortgage, might want a fixed-rate mortgage for one reason or another. I think the key is to ensure that consumers know what they're getting into, know what their choices are, have an opportunity at the appropriate times to be able to remove themselves from those contracts, when appropriate, in particular when the business practices in getting them to sign on to these programs may not be completely above board.

I think we've struck that balance, and I think we have all learned, as we have gone through this legislation, about the importance of and the complexities in our energy sector. We'll continue to learn as we go.

I think the other good thing to note for consumers is that we may not be done yet. If this legislation passes in this Legislature—if the will of the Legislature is to see this legislation pass, and I hope it is—we'll have a good opportunity to make this work. I think energy retailers will have ample opportunity to make this work, continue to do good, above board business and continue to allow consumers to have the protections they need. But we'll be watching carefully, and if this legislation doesn't prove to be everything we believe it will be, maybe other action will be necessary. At this point in time I'm absolutely confident that we've struck the proper balance that's going to protect consumers and ensure that tenants have the protection they need—this is a long-awaited piece of legislation for tenants.

I want again to thank all the members of the committee from all sides of the House. I want to thank my parliamentary assistant, who has shepherded this very complex piece of legislation. He's done a very able job of shepherding it through the committee system and getting consensus around the principles in this bill.

Madam Speaker, I'm now going to pass the floor over to the member from Brant, who will continue this conversation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The Chair recognizes the member from Brant.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity, on third reading, to have an opportunity during this lead to have some of my thoughts shared with the House and, in particular, with the opposition critics for whom I have nothing but praise with regard to the path we took during this process.

But I will start by saying that some will hold the opinion that this bill does not accomplish what we are saying it does. There will be some who will hold the opinion—and I don't vehemently disagree; I just simply disagree—that the way it was presented to us was as a prediction as opposed to an angered fit, and I respect that. What the opposition member did talk about was his experience and his understanding of how this bill would



have an impact on renters and people on fixed and low incomes. I don't subscribe to that because I think there are other factors that are going to be taking place outside of the bill that would, I honestly believe, not have the impact that he's predicting. I look forward to his rationale and his logic behind that, but I don't subscribe to it.

I also think that some will hold the opinion that the bill doesn't have enough teeth, and I don't subscribe to that, either. The minister made it clear that his intention is to use this as the first round of legislation that provides the companies an opportunity to change some of the behaviours that some of the companies were employing, and I guess the shot over the bow is if this doesn't do it, other things could. So that's out there and I think that it deserves to be understood.

At the heart of this proposed legislation, the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010, is the desire to help Ontario's energy consumers become better informed and, most importantly, to ensure that they are better protected, because there has been some lack of information that has not come. The second thing is there also have been some actions and activities that took place that the average consumer at the door should not tolerate, and governments have a role to play in making sure that that doesn't happen.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to echo the sentiments of the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure by again acknowledging the work of the standing committee and thanking all of the members for the questions and insights they've brought to the table, stakeholders from the consumer protection groups, tenant protection groups, individuals, retailers and others who contributed to the debate. I felt that all of the positions were clear. There were a few positions that I felt somewhat—a warning shot over the bow is that we have other things to do and we'll take other courses if we have to. But I would respectfully suggest to those individuals that this type of legislation is always part and parcel of how we work here, and we do have reams of individuals who are talented, skilled and trained at the legal level and also at the government policy level who work very hard, and I thank them for it.

This important bill has indeed benefited greatly from the committee process, which I do consider a privilege to have participated in. I've always made the commitment in this place to try to do the best I possibly can in finding consensus and finding the right piece of legislation to land on.

We heard some thought-provoking deputations from stakeholders who raised a number of interesting areas for discussion and debate. I believe that that was the important aspect of committee work and I felt very engaged by some of the organizations and individuals that did step forward. I must say that I was interested in the dialogue, the recommendations and the positions that some people took.

We listened carefully, and we did carefully analyze the concerns and the issues that were brought up. There

were copious meetings that were held after the hearings to digest that information that I asked on a couple of occasions in front of committee to make sure that staff heard what those deputations were all about. We tried to see where we could improve what I felt was already a pretty good piece of legislation, and I dealt with the opposition in a respectful manner that tried to incorporate some of the concerns that they were raising. I repeat again that that was not always going to end up being the case, but we're going to find out, if this Legislature sees fit to pass the legislation and if it comes into act, whether or not the dire predictions of some are going to come true.

I would suggest to you respectfully that there is a piece of this that we're going to do in regulation, and I made mention of that a couple of times. There's going to be some shopping and some touring and some consultation of the regulation stream that's going to go along with this.

If, indeed, after a review—which I'll bring up in a moment—takes place and some of the concerns that have been raised that we have not, to their opinion, dealt with shall surface, it will provide us with an opportunity to provide changes in our regulations and also provide us with an opportunity to introduce amendments to the act in order to clean up what they believed was a problem, if it indeed does appear.

1630

I felt it was an open and honest debate about the issues. I am very highly complimentary of all the people that we dealt with. I felt no threat of discord other than a difference of opinion, which I think is a good way to deal in this place.

I particularly wanted to acknowledge the pragmatic and respectful way in which the committee approached the important work, along with both opposition critics who used the same approach. I thought they were both pragmatic, I thought they were logical and I thought they presented their cases in a reasonable way. Indeed, I can say to them that their concerns were considered and did result in some of the amendments that did come forward, along with some of the technical ones that both the ministerial staff and the lawyer that we had participated in.

I said then—even before that—and I say now that there are very few obligations that are more central in the role of government and legislators than protecting consumers and individuals who can't protect themselves, and more importantly the entire population of Ontario. When government steps forward to form these types of regulatory streams, it's very important for them to understand that the attempt is being made to ensure (1) that they are safe, first and foremost; (2) that their consumer habits are protected; and (3) that they don't fall prey to people who do not follow the regulatory stream.

This was echoed by all members of the committee and all parties. I thank them for that. There wasn't one person who did not stand on the principle of protecting the consumers and making sure that they're cared for. The



public has a right to be protected against predatory, misleading or simply confusing retail practices. The public has the right to expect honest and straightforward business dealings, which, by the way, the most populous parts of our business do.

The public has the right to know when abuses occur and that they will be dealt with. We believe that the proposed legislation would do that in many ways. This includes measures that would ensure electricity retailers and gas marketers can operate their businesses in a fair and transparent way. This isn't about a hammer on business. It's to make sure that we do work with those partners.

By the way, they did offer some opportunities to dialogue with us and showed us examples of things that they've personally, proactively implemented to ensure that their customers understood what they were doing; that the reputations of those companies had been tarnished and they were working towards improving them.

It focuses on ensuring consumers have access to easy-to-understand information. As simple as that sounds, that seemed to have been one of the larger complaints that was coming forward from some of our consumers. They just didn't understand the complexity and the mind-numbing information that was being twisted and turned to get them to sign up. The information will help them make more informed decisions. Whether it's to stay with their local utility, or sign an energy contract with an electricity retailer or a gas marketer, that's fair game. I think that that's a fair way to approach this.

This bill also provides regulatory authority to address concerns regarding cancellation practices and fees. We heard stories of different ways in which some companies were really kind of pounding it to the consumer for cancelling, and also the fees that they had to pay for doing certain things that the company didn't want them to do—practices for which I'm sure that there probably isn't a member in this house who hasn't had that issue dealt with at their riding offices.

If passed, the legislation would include measures to ensure that tenants in units where suite metering is being introduced are fairly treated.

The bill, if passed, would provide clear authority to the Ontario Energy Board and regulatory authority for the government, if desired, to implement standards that would guide gas and electricity utilities, including sub-metering companies, in setting their rules for consumer security deposits and disconnections. During that time frame, what that's going to allow us to do is to put some certainty in what those people can assume in terms of what their consumer security deposits are going to be and the disconnections. Clearly, that starts to wrap up some of the concerns that were being expressed simply by saying that you can get them in another way: "If I can't get them this way, then I'll get them on the security deposits and the disconnects," and we're tying that knot up.

Today, I would also like to highlight some important amendments that were brought forward during the committee process that did provide us with an opportunity to make the legislation, I believe, even better, amendments which would ensure that the protection of Ontario's energy consumers was still further enhanced.

As the minister reminded us earlier, part of the bill deals with the practices of energy retailers and marketers. The first obligation is to ensure that consumers have every chance to fully understand what they're buying at the door. Unfortunately, sometimes, we've heard, again, promises of being made cheaper, long-term energy prices, and sometimes we've even heard that customers feel pressured to make a quick decision at a door or on the phone. That has already had impacts across North America, from various types of legislation that have cooling-off periods and all kinds of protections for consumers. We've heard stories about salespeople who don't clearly identify themselves or, what's even worse, whom they're representing.

The bill goes a long way to remedy these problems. The first part of the bill, if passed, would allow the government or the Ontario Energy Board to require door-to-door salespeople to clearly identify who they are, whom they work for, and even whom they do not work for. In some cases, we've heard stories of cutting out a picture of a trillium, putting it on a badge with their name, and saying they work for the government. That in itself is a little mischievous at best.

Through new regulations, the bill would establish training standards to root out unprofessional behaviour. We did hear deputation that some companies have already instituted that, and good for them; power to them; thanks to them. What they're doing is identifying a problem that we've identified here. We're taking some steps to entrench that, and they've already started to do some of the things themselves. So I think that they deserve a few pats on back for doing that.

This proposed legislation would also ensure that companies are held to account for their salespeople. Another trick we heard was that they did third party hiring, put them to the side, put their hands up when the complaint came in, and said, "They don't work for us; they're working independently." I know that all of us have said, "That's got to stop," so we're going to make them responsible for who comes to the door representing them. Regardless of whether they're working door-to-door, by phone or online, they're hired by that company, however they do it, and they're responsible.

If passed, Bill 235 would allow the government to require additional licensing conditions, including background checks for salespeople. That one in itself is very important, because of other possibilities that those types of people can come to your door, they can case the place, they can look for children, and they can do all kinds of things. I think companies don't want those kinds of people at their door representing them, so I know that they're embracing this kind of background-check opportunity on an ongoing basis.



If passed, the bill could allow requirements for retailers and marketers to use better language to explain the key sections of their contract, so that consumers can easily understand what they're buying over that length of time and how much it would cost: all of the kinds of questions that should be legitimately asked by the companies and responded to. It could allow the Ontario Energy Board to require retailers and marketers to use forms that will ensure that all of the costs are disclosed, so that the consumer can understand the difference between what they would pay each month if they stayed with their local utility or switched to a retailer, comparing apples and apples: information on a form that shows clearly that if they sign the contract, they know that they're comparing what they're presently paying for a utility or what they would pay for the retailer.

The first important proposed amendment I'd like to highlight today focuses on the portion of the bill that deals with third party verification. Although they didn't get the entire ask—and I know that the critic for the Progressive Conservative Party brought this to our attention—they got half of the thing, so I know that there are probably going to be some concerns about third party verification. We did try to deal with that.

I would suggest, very respectfully, that this half was as important as the other half, and that is: We are now going to have rules that would enable the retailers and marketers to directly provide the service of third party verification so that it ensures that the customer has the opportunity to consider and confirm the contract before it becomes enforceable. So third party verification will be in-house: That means that the companies who did present to us and said, "You're going to make us go and hire somebody else"—we could be hearing telephone calls from India. So we want the retailers to know that that verification is going to be done by them if they choose. We believe that third party verification, in and of itself, is an important aspect, but because they brought it to our attention, we listened to it and made that part of the amendment.

This amendment would have a dual effect of enhancing consumer protection and making the industry more accountable to the OEB, because the Ontario Energy Board would not have jurisdiction over an out-of-province, out-of-country third party verifier.

1640

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** This fixes that.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** We fixed that by doing it this way. I'm sure that the dual effect of that amendment was brought on not only by the industry, but it was supported, I would point out, by both opposition parties, because they saw the value in the consumer protection end of it.

This is just one powerful example of how the work of the committee was done, to hone the proposed legislation to be more precise, easier to follow, and keenly focused on protecting the interests of the consumer while still allowing business to operate in a fair and transparent manner.

That was the other discussion that was pretty healthy, to ensure that we didn't shut an industry down. There are thousands of people who would be employed during this process, and if we can get that component right, and we have that service provided in a way that the consumers can accept and be protected, I think the industry is well served, as much as it needed a wakeup call or the changes that we're proposing in this piece of legislation. Because I would respectfully suggest to you that it's at the higher end of complaints that all of the members would hear in their constituency offices, particularly during a season in which renewals are necessary.

We want to keenly focus on protecting those interests, and having this business practice done in a transparent manner that the industry is actually accepting.

The second amendment I'd like to mention today wisely acknowledges the speedy pace of change in Ontario's energy market landscape. What we're talking about is an amendment that would provide the government with the authority to require the Ontario Energy Board to review the portion of the bill that deals with electricity retailers and gas marketers after three years.

What we're saying, and I was saying this earlier, is that after three years, even though there are predictions that the bill will cause an awful lot of discourse, a full review by the OEB will take place, and whatever regulatory streams need to be adjusted, tweaked, changed or modified could take place during that time. This would provide the government with the authority for the Ontario Energy Board to do just that: to ensure that the appropriate regulatory and legislative framework is in place to protect the consumer. That sentence confirms what the bill is trying to do.

Additional proposed measures could be introduced after the review. This says that in the three-year time frame while this is being implemented, that review takes place and then other regulatory streams can be introduced to tighten up, to shore up, anything that has kind of poked its head through that is not good for consumer protection.

I'm looking over to my colleague across the way, the critic, who's going to speak next, and I would ask him if he's ready. Is he going to be ready? Okay, thank you.

This amendment sends the message that we will continue to be vigilant.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** He asked, as a favour. He's—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Oh, I know that. He's ever ready, for sure.

To stay focused: The amendment sends the message that we will continue to be vigilant. It provides an important chance for review and re-examination and allows those in the service of the public an opportunity to continue to act in its best interest.

This is not going to be "pass a piece of legislation and let it collect dust" or "let it die and wither." We're going to be proactive and re-evaluate this.

My belief is that the proposed legislation will go quite a far way toward fulfilling the vital obligation, which is



to protect Ontario's energy consumers. While ensuring sound business practices, we can ensure that consumers are protected. We can do both.

I was very pleased to be able to participate as the standing committee examined the bill. I appreciate the confidence that the minister has shown in my capacity to help us with legislation and the dialogue that took place. I deeply appreciate that opportunity.

I proudly and sincerely thank and acknowledge the work of the ministry staff, who worked tirelessly.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** While the heckling was going on, I want to repeat that so that I'm sure the members opposite would agree with me.

I proudly and sincerely thank and acknowledge the work of ministry staff who, day after day in this place, help all of us and work tirelessly to ensure that we write the best pieces of legislation that we possibly can.

I was impressed with the fine questions and the keen eye of the committee members who brought this very important piece of legislation to life.

I'm very thankful for the input from the stakeholders and for some of their proactive responses to major identified consumer problems. They do deserve some credit for standing up and identifying that they've got a problem and saying they're going to work toward improving it. It's their job now, I'd respectfully suggest, to ensure that it gets done right; to make sure that the consumers who, at the door, were feeling they were not being listened to—now we all are listening to them, and I'm sure we can work together to ensure that that happens again. I believe that, working together, we have developed a bill that will help benefit Ontario and the hard-working men and women who call it their home.

I've made a commitment in my public service to try to write the best possible legislation. I stand very proudly in the Legislature to say that I believe we have made a really good attempt at this particular piece of legislation, the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010.

Again, I want to compliment all of the members of the committee for the hard work they've done. I look forward to the comments they'll make on third reading. I look forward to the regulatory stream that's going to come on board and the consultation that the government has made a commitment to do to continue writing this piece of legislation for the protection of the Ontario consumer.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very happy to have listened since last December, when Minister Phillips introduced this—and the work done by the new minister, Mr. Duguid, and the comments made most recently by the member from Brant.

We on this side would be agreeable to anything that improves conditions for the people of Ontario, especially in the retailer section on energy. It provokes a lot of larger questions on the whole energy file, but I'm going

to stick, with my comments, to the bill, with respect to our critic Mr. Yakubuski, who'll be speaking next.

There's some controversy on the sub-metering issue and the bill-averaging part, but the only thing that's really for certain is that regardless of who's selling the energy to you, the issue broadly is that it's going to cost more. Electricity is probably going to double in the next two to three years. They'll probably hold it off until after 2011. If you look at the article by Jan Carr, who is the head of the Ontario Power Authority—he submitted a couple of articles in the paper last week—I think the signals are there. They're all talking about the smart meter. Well, we still haven't heard the rest of the story on the smart meter. You, the consumer, are going to pay on your monthly bill for the smart meter. You're going to pay a rental charge on the smart meter. And it's not a smart meter, it's a time-of-use meter. So there's a lot more going on here.

I think there's a lot of noise on the surface, but subtly, they're doing something here that's correct: protecting the consumer. When someone knocks on your door and asks you to sign a contract, you have some protections. You have a cooling-off period, a couple of them, which I think are important. So they've done some things right here, but at the end of the day their energy policies are simply going to cost you more. Be prepared.

We support this particular bill, but what we don't support is their whole Bill 150 approach to you paying more and using—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I had an opportunity to listen to the minister and the parliamentary assistant. I will say that, in fact, it's true that I felt the committee worked on this bill in a fairly businesslike way. Not every debate has to be a nasty debate. But I have to say that there are fundamental problems with the approach of the government to the energy question and there are fundamental problems with this bill in both of its halves, both in terms of dealing with energy retailers and in dealing with sub-meters.

I want to deal first with the retailers, and this is something I'll expand on when I get to do my leadoff. Saying that we should protect the energy retailers, the marketers, because they employ thousands of people is the same argument that one could make for the private health care systems that existed in this province and this country before medicare came in. Yes, you can employ a lot of people doing things that duplicate work, that do not advance the green energy agenda—or even a simply businesslike energy agenda—and yes, you can say that if you change things they won't be working there. I would say that if you have thousands of people working, it would make far more sense to have them employed assessing households to see how they can reduce their energy consumption, administering a large-scale program of energy efficiency and conservation, and giving people the education they need to operate their buildings—their homes—more effectively. Selling retail energy is not



advancing the wealth of this society; it is putting on a layer of sales and administration that is a waste of our social capital, our common wealth. That is a mistake.

1650

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex.

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I'm pleased to rise and make some remarks on what has been said to date on Bill 235, which deals with electricity retailers and gas marketers. I think that many members in this House, if not all, have experienced some of the negative sides of that particular dealing—electricity retailers and gas marketers—so the government is trying to bring forth an action plan with respect to consumer protection in this regard, and transparent disclosure in a number of sectors.

The bill as it is now, at third reading, did go before the Standing Committee on General Government. The government proceeded to have public hearings of participating stakeholders with the other two parties along with us, at about the end of March 2010. Then there was a review of that information, it was voted on and motions for amendments were made. So we have an amended version back before the House for all three parties to scrutinize.

I know that in my riding we had many, many circumstances where people simply did not understand or perhaps were not given a full explanation of what they had purchased in terms of either electricity or natural gas, and in some cases had bought one of these utilities and did not realize at all that they had bought the other utility. I think we've gone a long way toward making sure that contracts are in plain language and that people fully understand what they are purchasing. This will be good for the community at large.

I'm pleased to have made a little bit of a comment here, and I'm sure many of us in this House are pleased with this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's a pleasure for me to provide some comments as well on Bill 235. I must say that when I joined the Legislative Assembly and was assigned to a committee, I certainly didn't think that my first experience with a committee would be the clause-by-clause review of Bill 235.

It was quite an eye-opener for me, as a new member, to sit in committee. I was so glad that the veteran member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke was there to guide me through the process. I have to tell you that the parliamentary assistant did a wonderful job going through the many amendments, and I appreciated the banter from the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I was a bit disappointed. As a new member, I was hoping that maybe some of our amendments would get passed. But I certainly realized how that four-hour span went, and it was a nice eye-opener for me in my first foray into committee politics.

As many of you know, I worked in a constituency office for my predecessor, Senator Runciman.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you. I'm glad for that.

I knew this was an issue. I dealt with many folks who were extremely concerned about energy retailers. I know that the issue of energy costs, and things like smart meters and the fact that electricity costs would be going up because of the HST, were big concerns for many of my constituents during the by-election. I know that many of them are still looking for relief with the HST coming on July 1, and they want a government that will listen to them.

In terms of the retailers, certainly I know that in many circles this bill has been long overdue. From our perspective, the much-learned member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will be speaking—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member from Brant has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I always start with saying thank you. Thank you to the members from Durham, Toronto–Danforth, Chatham–Kent–Essex and Leeds–Grenville for their comments. I will leave it to that to say that my anticipation for the bill's specifics was received by Her Majesty's loyal opposition in terms of consumer protection. I appreciate those comments. The rest of the comments that come are always expected in terms of, "but we don't like your government because you don't do things right." I think they understand that we got this piece right, and I appreciate deeply that they have made those comments.

The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex said it really well when he said that it's an action plan for consumer protection. Quite frankly, in credit to the critic, he made that statement several times during the deputations. I think the people of Ontario are going to appreciate the type of legislation we're putting forward here.

The member from Leeds–Grenville, yes, needs a quick little reminder of how that works. If he did recall, my conversation with the critic was that you had a piece of legislation amendment in there that actually got tied into two or three that we already contemplated, and because of the nature of how it works, ours was said first, and yours had almost the same language, so we basically deferred every time a new piece of legislation came up. We hit the spots that we both agreed upon, and I made a point of that. If you check Hansard, you will see that.

The good news is that I think we're going to be able to get a piece of legislation out there that is going to be seen as protecting the consumer, and that's what this is about. As for the rest of the argument about how bad our energy policy is or the HST and everything else, we didn't talk about that. We didn't debate that, but I know we're going to hear about it. I do want to know that this bill is going to be protected.

As far as the NDP is concerned, they put it on record that they're not supporting the bill, but I—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you very much. Further debate?



**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak again to Bill 235. I've been encouraged by the member from Brant to get all my negatives out of the way early, but I only have an hour, and all of my negatives could never be dealt with in an hour. I say that not only speaking about this bill, but just my own negatives. I have that many faults, and it would take a long time to list them all.

The member for Brant did say, "We got this bill right." Well, I cannot agree with the member from Brant when he says, "We got this bill right." What I can concede, and I have said: Is the energy consumer better off today or will be better off when this legislation is passed than before this legislation was tabled? Absolutely. Absolutely, the energy consumer, the customer at the door, is going to be better off. We've been encouraging the government to bring forth legislation that would do just that.

We're going back now a year and a half, anyway, or more. I'm trying to think of when David Ramsay first brought forth his private member's bill. At the same time, we were actually having meetings with the Ontario Energy Association. Shane Pospisil was the CEO at that time, and they were working very strongly to try to bring forward reforms to the retail contract sector so that there would be some improvements, because anybody who is going to stand and say that there weren't a whole lot of problems would be dreaming in Technicolor, because there were. I appreciate the comments.

Before I drift on into my other self, I do want to thank the minister for the kind words that he said earlier about all of the participants, all of the people who worked on this bill and all of the participants in the debate and all of the participants in committee when we went through amendments to the bill itself. We appreciate the kind words that were said about ourselves and Mr. Tabuns, the representative from the third party, the New Democrats, as well, and, of course, Mr. Levac and the other members of the government on the committee. I don't know if he's a member of the committee, but I know he's the parliamentary assistant to the minister as well, so he would probably be as well versed in this bill as anyone in the House.

1700

Now, getting back to where I said, "Did they get it right?"—well, not exactly. There were a couple of things where we felt they could have made some improvements, some changes, and they respectfully declined. We accept that. I did have an opportunity to have a discussion prior to clause-by-clause with Mr. Levac, and I think substantively we're looking for the same thing. We're maybe going to get there by a different route, but what they see as being in the best interests of the consumer from a protection point of view—I respectfully disagree on a couple of occasions.

One of those occasions was—and I say this with the greatest of sincerity; it's what I believe—what the government had in the original piece of legislation, and substantially that's what we have today, the circumstance

where, if the energy retailer is at the door, they agree to a contract with the consumer, and then it has to be verified by a third party, but between 10 and 60 days—if I have it correctly. I'm actually relying on the parliamentary assistant to nod or shake his head if he thinks I'm going the wrong way, and then I'll actually look at the notes, if I have to. Essentially that's the part of the bill that says they have to get third party verification after 10 days but before 60 days.

We're certainly in a better position than we are today, but what our position was, we felt that getting that third party verification immediately would actually be better. My explanation for that is such: We're having a debate about where, if we buy something and then somebody wants to know what was said—this is a third party verifier now. They want to know what was said, and the suggestion was made and the undertaking was made by the industry that the seller at the door would then have to leave the premises and a third party verifier would then ask those questions. These would have been the key questions: Did the representative claim he was with the utility? If the answer is yes, the contract is void. Did the representative promise that you would save money? If the answer is yes, out the door. He's not coming back. The contract's null and void.

Some of those would have been the key—and there would have been a script that the government could have prescribed, ensuring that every consumer was asked the same questions in the same way and in the same time frame.

The reason we wanted this done as quickly as possible is that if you're searching for details, your best memory is as soon as the event took place. As soon as the event took place, you are likely to be the most clear about the minute details of the conversation.

What would still apply is the contract law that says that you still have 10 days without having to justify or establish any reasons. Simply by contract law, within 10 days you can get out of it anyway. That would still apply. Even if that was verified at the door, you still have 10 days, and the reason we have that 10 days is—for example, I'll tell you a personal situation.

My mother-in-law, 76 years old, doesn't speak the best of English. She was born in Lithuania, has never worked off the land, has never had a driver's licence, lives in a little apartment in Eganville. She purchased one of these energy contracts. Now, as it turns out, she didn't talk to me within 10 days. It actually got processed, but we did get it cancelled because she certainly didn't understand the terms of it, and we were able to—but I must say, the company that was involved was very quick to respond to my call, so we had that contract terminated. But in a lot of cases they'll have the opportunity to talk to a son, daughter, son-in-law, brother, nephew or whatever and ask them, "What do you think about this electricity contract that I signed?" And that third party, being a relative or friend, may say to them, "No, I don't think that's a good idea, Mom," or Aunt May or whatever the case may be—"I don't think that's a good idea." You still



have those 10 days to say, "No, thank you. I appreciate you coming by, but this ain't gonna be for me." So you still have that option that has nothing to do with the amendment that we proposed. One of the points of the amendments is to try to avoid problems, and the best way, we believed, to avoid problems was to deal with them as quickly as possible so that the circumstances were freshest in everybody's minds.

The other thing that we felt it would do was it would expose the rogue agent, the rebel, the person who was being dishonest at the door and was making statements that could not be justified or, in fact, were untrue. And the best way to do that, of course, is to have the earliest recollection of the contact with that particular agent.

I can tell you that as the energy critic, I probably have as much involvement in this as anyone, because I even have members of my own caucus who will call me and say, "Look, we've got a problem in such-and-such a town with this contract. We'd like to see what you can do to get that adjusted, reversed or whatever." I've probably contacted these companies as much as or more than anybody. We know the minister is not going to be calling them, because he's busier than I am. But I do have a contract with them, and I can tell you that if there's a rogue out there, they want to know about it, and the best way to find out about it is to have that information available as quickly as possible. Nobody's pretending anymore that there's not trouble out there or there wasn't trouble out there. Every one of those companies that is out there now recognizes that they're under the microscope, and they should be, because the paramount purpose of this bill—and we do commend the government for bringing this legislation forward; we certainly encourage them to do so—the paramount reason for bringing forth this bill is to offer better consumer protection.

Let me back up just a little bit because I do want to make sure we get those things in. As I was talking about David Ramsay and Shane Pospisil—it was back, I think, in December 2008 that David Ramsay brought forth some reforms in a private member's bill, and it got the conversation really going with regard to what reforms could be brought forward. What was disappointing was that nothing came forward in all of the time—and we had many, many chats with Minister Smitherman when he was the minister, and asked him—on repeated occasions I would walk across the aisle and say, "George, when are we going ahead with reform in the retail electricity retailers sector?" "Well, Yak, we're working on it," and never did he actually bring forth the bill. Gerry Phillips brought forth the bill when he was the energy minister, and then it was up to Minister Duguid to finish the job.

I had many things to say with David Ramsay at the time, and we certainly thanked him on more than one occasion, including in debate during his private member's bill, which I spoke to at that time, for bringing this issue forward into this House.

There's nobody out there who doesn't have tales of problems at the door on the retail contract side of the

business. Probably what was the coup de grâce, as they say, or the final straw, was the exposé that was done, I think on CBC Marketplace, where they actually had some footage of improper actions on the part of a representative. I think it encouraged everyone to be more proactive in bringing forth legislation that would actually improve the situation.

1710

So that was one of the amendments, just to restate that, and that was the time frame in which you would have to verify the contract. So we did disagree on that.

There were, I believe, 107 amendments to the bill, most of them technical, which does speak to the fact that at the end of the day, what you really have to ask yourself—there must have been an awful push to get something on paper in a hurry. Because when you make 107 amendments, most of them technical, clearly some things were not considered or left out. Many of these amendments are with the Electricity Act, are amendments to other acts that I guess are required to give this bill the authority to make it function.

Now I want to change gears a little bit—and I know the member for Brant will really start paying attention.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** You're impugning my motive. I always pay attention.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** He does.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh my God, the member for Mississauga is here.

Well, I think we can certainly stay on the subject. There's no problem there, Madam Speaker.

The name of the act: An Act to enact the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010, and to amend other Acts. So what we're talking about here is consumer protection. And you can't talk about Bill 235 without talking about the whole electricity sector, because it is part of the big picture. If you're going to protect consumers at the door, you also have to talk about the price they're paying for electricity in general.

One of the big sections of that bill in these electricity contracts is what is referred to as the global adjustment. Some people call it the global adjustment, and others call it the provincial benefit. I think the government likes the term "global adjustment" these days, more than the term "provincial benefit." Let me tell you why. Currently, in the month of April 2010, that global adjustment has reached an all-time high of 4.57 cents per kilowatt hour. What that means is that for every kilowatt hour you use, there's a global adjustment to that price of 4.57 cents. If the price of electricity, which is relatively low these days—and I didn't look at it specifically today, but I think we can safely, based on what it has been for the last year, say that the market price of electricity is probably around 3.2 or 3.3 cents. But on top of that price, as a result of the energy policies of this government, 4.57 cents are being tacked on. Some people see it and some people don't. If you're an electricity consumer who uses in business more than 250,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per month, then right on your bill you will be



paying that provincial benefit or, as they like to call it, the “global adjustment.” I know the minister likes to use the term “global adjustment,” because how can you tell somebody it’s going to cost you 4.57 cents a kilowatt hour and call it a benefit? It’s very difficult. It’s certainly hard to accept for the person who’s paying it.

Each one of those consumers is paying that. But also, if you’ve signed an electricity contract—and we’ll just say for the sake of argument that that electricity contract is at 7.5 cents a kilowatt hour. One of the reasons people sign electricity contracts is because they want certainty. They know that the price will be 7.5 cents a kilowatt hour, or eight or whatever it is, for the duration of the contract. But unbeknownst to most people signing those contracts, the provincial benefit also gets tacked onto those contracts. If your contract was at eight cents, this month you would be paying 12.57 cents a kilowatt hour—and that’s just for the electricity. That does not include the delivery; that does not include the debt retirement or the taxes. That’s just for the electricity—

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** The HST is coming.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Plus the HST that’s going to come July 1.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I see members on the other side sighing because they’re wondering how their constituents are going to pay for their power bills. They are wondering how their own constituents in rural Ontario are going to pay for those bills.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** We’re wondering when you’re going to talk about the consumer protection act.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member for Brant is always encouraging me, and I appreciate that, because I tend not to use all my time; I just speak for a little bit and then pass it on to others. But he is encouraging me to keep going, to press on.

This provincial benefit is going to start to be reflected—if you’ve got a bill from Hydro One, you don’t notice it because there are so many Hydro One customers out there that it’s being equalized across that they’re not seeing it, but it’s about to start happening. It’s about to start having an effect on your hydro bill, if you pay Toronto Hydro or another public utility in the town or the city that you live in or if you pay your bills through Hydro One. This month, it’s an all-time high: 4.57 cents a kilowatt hour.

Only the electricity contract sector has to specify that amount on the bill. There’s a separate line item for the provincial benefit on their bill. If that remains the case, I would suspect that the electricity contract marketers are going to be out of business anyway, because the consumer in no way is going to be able to pay those kinds of rates.

Why are those rates so high? Because just a few years ago, that provincial benefit was actually a provincial benefit. The way it worked was, that same major user that I’m talking about, which uses 250,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per month, was actually seeing their bill reduced by the provincial benefit because it was a nega-

tive number. Prices were higher then because the economy was rolling better and there was a higher demand for electricity. Let’s just say for the sake of argument that on any given day, the price of electricity was six cents. If that provincial benefit was a penny, they were dropping it down to an actual cost of five cents. Today—let’s just say for the sake of argument it’s 3.5 cents, and you tack on another 4.57 cents; now you’re talking about a little over eight cents for that same kilowatt hour of electricity. You wonder why businesses—

*Interjection.*

1720

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Large users, Jean-Marc, 250,000 kilowatt hours a month, pay the provincial benefit—absolutely. So does everybody else. They just don’t see it in their bill. What is the genesis of that, and what is causing that to go so high? Well, it is all those contracts the government is signing.

When the government doesn’t like to be associated with something, they say, “No, no, no. That’s the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, that is signing those contracts with all these generators.” But if the government is doing something that they figure the people like, all of a sudden it’s the Minister of Energy making the announcement. I guess that’s politics.

But that provincial benefit is going to keep rising, because it is a result of all the contracts they’re signing at 80 cents a kilowatt hour, the contracts at 44 cents a kilowatt hour, the contracts at 13.5 cents for on-ground wind and the contracts at 19 cents for offshore wind. The current price of electricity in the province is 5.8 cents a kilowatt hour, up to 6.7 after your first 1,000 hours—it may have changed to 750 hours because of the time of year; we’re moving out of the heating season. All those sweetheart energy deals they’re signing with developers—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We didn’t sign any of them, Jean-Marc. All those sweetheart energy deals they’re signing with developers making all kinds of profits: Why do you think people are lining up—lining up—to sign an energy contract with OPA under FIT, the feed-in tariff program? Because they know they are going to make a barrel full of money. For all those who think these people are building these giant wind farms because they’re saving the world, don’t believe it. They’re doing it because they are fully chasing one thing, the almighty dollar. They’re going to make a lot of money, and you’re going to pay a lot of money.

Interestingly enough, I suggest that some members on the other side of the House should read a recent article called “A Rational Framework for Electricity Policy.” It pretty well questions everything the current government is doing. It was in the recent *Engineering Dimensions* magazine. Do you know who wrote it?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Brad Duguid.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, it wasn’t Brad Duguid. But it was Jan Carr, who is an expert in the energy field and was the first CEO of OPA. Jan Carr wrote that



article, and he pretty well questions everything this government is doing with regard to electricity policy and where it's going to drive us. Maybe it would be an interesting thing for the minister to read. "A Rational Framework for Electricity Policy" talks about the rush to renewables. I could read the article, but I only have 33 minutes left, and I don't know if I've got time. But I might refer to some parts of it.

There's another one done by Puica Nitu, P.Eng. It's called *Wind Power: A Cautionary Tale*. It talks a little bit about the experience in Germany and Spain, and how they are challenged now because of their rush to build so many wind turbines, which has caused them to have to build all kinds of backup sources of power because what a lot of people don't realize, Madam Speaker—I know you do, but a lot of people don't—is that the wind is not controlled by a switch.

**Ms. M. Aileen Carroll:** No?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's right, Aileen. It's not controlled by a switch. You can't go over to the electrical panel and say, "Up you go, switch. Blow, wind, blow." No. The good Lord controls the wind, as he does the sun. So what happens is that on those days that the wind isn't blowing, we have to have something available in the system to provide the power that is absent because of the effects of the weather.

When you build that wind and you sign a contract for 20 years with a developer that's making a whole lot of money, you also have to build something else. And what are they building to back it up? They're building natural gas. But you see, now we start to ask ourselves, what was the whole rationale for them to say we're getting out of coal? Because they wanted to cut back on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. But if you stop building coal or using coal—nobody's building coal, but they are building, believe it or not, coal plants in Germany. The reason they're building coal plants is that they have to have something to back up the wind, and so they're building coal plants. They're building coal plants in China, opening a coal plant in China, every five days.

What the plan here is—they say they're replacing coal with wind. Well, that is absolutely wrong. They're not replacing coal with wind because you can't replace coal with wind. You can't replace a consistent, dispatchable form of electricity generation with one that is inherently intermittent. The Premier himself said in this House, "You can't depend on wind. Wind is not reliable." Those are his words, not mine. So what are they doing? They're building gas plants to replace the coal. But before anybody says, "Oh, that's the answer," it is somewhat duplicitous to say that you're closing coal plants to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and replace them with gas plants, which have about half the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of a coal plant. But that's when it's burned here in Ontario. What they're not telling us about is the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that is the life cycle of getting that gas here to Ontario, because when that gas is taken out of the ground out west, all the sulphur is processed out of it. It's stored in piles out in Alberta. You can go see them. But it takes massive

amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> to generate the power to remove the sulphur from that natural gas before they ship it here.

For them to say that they're doing this and reducing natural gas, people have to be cautioned that that is not the case. They should be sceptical about anything they're saying about reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by building wind turbines and replacing coal with natural gas because it simply doesn't compute.

About 90% of the CO<sub>2</sub> in this province is produced from transportation anyhow, so unless they're going to do something about transportation, unless we're all going to be driving electric cars, which we know is not going to happen because even the new trains they're building—they're buying diesel trains instead of electric. They speak out of both sides of their mouths when they talk about reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and protecting the environment. That has been consistently—the only consistency with regard to them there is the fact that they are totally inconsistent in their messaging and what they are actually doing.

But where are they going to get the power? You see, if you want to start talking about the amount you have to replace, we have in the system roughly about 6,500 megawatts of coal. That would require 13,000 wind turbines dispersed across the province, if the wind turbines ran all the time or could be called upon whenever you wanted them. But because they only work about 20% of the time—that's the average. Germany has about 27,000 megawatts of wind in its system. The latest figures for the efficiency of Germany's wind fleet is it runs at between 18% and 19%. So if we give ours 20%, instead of 13,000, you would need 65,000 wind turbines to replace those coal plants, because they only work 20% of the time.

1730

Now we have to start talking about the 3,000 megawatts of nuclear that they're shutting down in this province in 2020, because the remaining units at Pickering A have not been refurbished and all of Pickering B is not going to be refurbished. Now that's 3,000 megawatts of nuclear power that is baseload power and runs all the time. Except when it's down for maintenance, it runs full out. It's not dispatchable power: We don't call on more or less, like the gas pedal in your car. You run them, and you run them full out.

In 2020, those plants are going down forever. That's 3,000 megawatts. We talked about 6,500 megawatts: That's another 3,000 megawatts that are going out of our system. But in the interim period—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** That's good.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member from Northumberland—Quinte West says, "That's good." I guess he's going to tell us where we're going to get all the power. I'm sure he's got the solutions for it. Yes, I'd like to see what he's going to be saying a few years from now.

You see, before 2020 comes, we've also got to face the facts about what's happening at Darlington nuclear and Bruce nuclear. The units at Bruce range in age from, I believe, about 1976 to 1987. Those six units at Bruce



have to be refurbished. All four units at Darlington have to be refurbished. We've got to rebuild those units if we're going to have reliable power. They're reaching the age where they will no longer be operable without refurbishment.

You have this overlap, because you can't refurbish a nuclear plant—it's not like Wile E. Coyote on Bugs Bunny: Just add water, and you've got an instant Acme nuclear plant or something like that. No, if you're going to refurbish a nuclear plant, you're talking at least two years—at least two years. Now you start looking at the dates, and we've got to start refurbishing those nuclear plants by 2016 at the latest.

In addition to the ones that you're taking out of circulation permanently and the coal that they say they're going to shut down by 2014, now you look at those nuclear plants, and you've got to start refurbishing them. You can't do them one at a time, because you don't have time. If you tried to do them one at a time, two years, two years and two years, we've got 10 that have to be refurbished. That's a 20-year program. They're not going to last that long without refurbishment.

Now you have to start talking about overlapping at least two nuclear reactors at any given time. If you're taking two at Bruce out of circulation, that's two that produce nominally 750 megawatts apiece. If you're taking out two at Darlington, you're taking out two units that produce almost 900 megawatts apiece. Now you've got two at Darlington out—that's 1,800 additional megawatts gone—two at Bruce, 1,500. If you've got a combination of the two, well, you can do the math.

Where is the reliable power going to come from to power the economy of this province in five years, in 10 years, in 15 years if the only thing that these guys want to build is because it's very, very politically popular? People believe, "Oh, yes. Well, they're doing the right thing. They're building all kinds of green power." But you also have a responsibility to respect the bedrock principles of Ontario's electricity history. The way that our economy became successful and the best economy in this country and one of the strongest economies in the world was that it was built on an abundant supply of reliable, affordable electricity. Electricity drove our standard of living. It drove our economic success. You can't separate electricity from economics in this province. When you start to do that, you threaten not only the electricity supply but you threaten the economy.

That's what they're doing with this pretending exercise that they call the Green Energy Act. They want everybody to believe that somehow they're going to save the world with the Green Energy Act here in Ontario.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's a start, John.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Everyone who wants to do the math will know that you can't have it both ways, I say to Lou over there, who says, "It's a start." Here's the energy minister one day talking about how the contracts they signed are going to make a huge difference in the electricity supply in Ontario. Then, shortly after that, when people start asking the Premier, "What does that

mean to the price?"—because all of these sources that you're citing here now are very expensive, from roughly 13.5 cents to 80.2 cents. They asked the Premier, "What are we going to do about the price? What about the price?" The Premier says, "It's not going to have that big an impact on the price because we're not really producing that much." I guess, depending upon your audience, you tell the people who want to hear you say that you're changing the world—you're telling them that that's exactly what you're doing, but then you're telling the other people, "No, we're really not doing that much because it won't have that big an effect on price."

You can't have it both ways. You can't fill your supply box with expensive sources and not change the price dramatically, and if you're not changing the price dramatically, it's because you aren't making much of a difference. What you're doing continuously here is overselling the impact that the new generation is going to have and underselling or understating the impact that this is going to have on the price of electricity in the province of Ontario. I don't know how many times I have asked in this House for the government to just come clean and be totally honest about their electricity policy.

I remember when this government was elected; oh, yes, I remember when this government was elected. I never slept a wink that night, and I always thought it was because I was elected that night, but no, it was because this government was elected. I remember when this government said that they were going to depoliticize the electricity sector, the energy sector. Never—and that is the one thing that you're consistently hearing from stakeholders in this sector. It is a little different with Minister Duguid because he's not quite so aggressive as the previous minister. I don't mean Gerry Phillips; you couldn't find a nicer guy than Gerry Phillips.

1740

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask the speaker not to make personal references to other members.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** As I said, the former minister, Gerry Phillips. Yes, the former minister, Gerry Phillips; I think that's all right, isn't it, Madam Speaker? Because the new minister is Brad Duguid. But it was the previous minister, George Smitherman, whom the sector had the most trouble with because they found him to be "somewhat aggressive," would be the term. But the one thing that they consistently say is that the politicization of this sector has never been deeper.

All you've got to do is look back to when Dwight Duncan was the Minister of Energy and he brought in Bill 100 and created the OPA. What he said was that this was going to be a virtual agency. We know what the OPA is today; it's a hugely expensive, bureaucratic buffer for the government. As I said earlier, the government uses the OPA for its own purposes. When it wants to be the hero, it shoves the OPA aside and goes out and does the talking and makes all the announcements. When it is a little nervous about how people might react, you can rest assured it's going to be a spokesperson from the



OPA, and the government will let them take the slings and arrows and then decide whether they're going to respond or make statements themselves or not.

The OEB, Ontario Energy Board, which was brought in by the Progressive Conservative government under Bill Davis, was put here for one reason, and that was to protect the energy consumer in the province of Ontario—not politically; not in a partisan way. Their whole mandate was to protect the energy consumer. When you talk to people in the energy sector today, they are shocked at how the OEB has been neutered, gutted, eviscerated. You could use any number of adjectives to describe what this government has done to the OEB. It has made it a weaker agency at the very time when it should be stronger and more vibrant and powerful than ever. Why have they done that? Because they want politics to rule the day. They want politics to be the issue. They want politics to determine what energy policies will be brought forward by the government.

I'm looking at the clock, and I am running—

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Are you running out of steam?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, no. I could go on forever, but I didn't realize what the time on the clock was, to be honest with you. I was only looking at that clock. So I am going to wind up here in a minute or two.

Let's go back to Bill 235. I want to reiterate what I said earlier about the importance of bringing in better protection for the retail electricity consumer with respect to being offered contracts here in the province of Ontario. I do agree with the government that bringing in this legislation was the right thing to do. We didn't agree with all of the parts of the legislation. We do believe there should have been some other amendments that we had put forward. However, as my friend Steve Clark, the member from Leeds–Grenville, said earlier, none of our amendments were accepted, but we're used to that.

At the end of the day on this particular occasion, as I said, is the consumer better off because of this legislation than they were before? We believe, in our party, the PC Party of Ontario—our leader Tim Hudak and our caucus believe that this bill will help to protect the energy consumer. We could talk about many aspects of the bill, but I am going to say that that's it for now and pass this on to someone else.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Given the time, I will have an opportunity perhaps to give some introductory remarks to my leadoff later.

I wanted to speak to the parliamentary assistant and all those present here about the fundamental concerns I have with the bill. I have to say that if this bill addressed the retail marketing industry and brought in some further protections, although I don't think they're adequate, I wouldn't vote against them. I would say that the more that's brought in, the less likely that this industry will flourish in the future. But the concern I have most fundamentally with the bill relates to submetering.

My concern is that the way things are structured—as units become vacant, meters will be installed—will fundamentally change the incentives that landlords have to invest in energy efficiency and conservation. They will put tenants in a situation where they will be dealing with energy costs but don't have the legal right to change the building that they're in, nor do they have the financial wherewithal to do that. The way tenants will be hit as they go forward with the installation of submeters means that tenants, 30% of whom are low-income or at the poverty line, will be faced with higher costs than they have had to deal with in the past and a reduced standard of living.

There will be other points that I will touch on, but for those reasons alone this move forward on submetering is a step backward environmentally and socially in this province. For that reason, just so that the parliamentary assistant and others are clear, I don't believe this bill should be supported.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I know that the critic for the opposition wants to hear very clearly my comments about his leadoff speech. Of the 51 minutes that he used—I have it down to the second, but I'm not going to insult him by making it down to the second about how much time was actually spent on the bill.

I will make a comment on the comments that he made about the bill and third party verification. There are three ways in which we're going to be able to protect the consumer: the 10-day cooling-off period, the third party verification that happens between 10 and 60 days and the first bill. Thirty days after you get your first bill, you can still cancel. So the 10-day cooling-off period is one, the 10-day to 60-day third party verification is the other. We changed it with an amendment by making it in-house, and the standard questions that he's talking about will still take place. Those standard questions that he's talking about—"Did they misrepresent themselves as an agent of"—are going to be established by the OEB and given to the in-house provider. So that argument that he made about it having to be on the spot does not stand the test.

He talked about the rogues who are out there, that we didn't know that the rogues are out there. I'm sorry; the industry knew that the rogues were out there.

The company is doing its own review: The assumption that the bill is not the be-all and end-all is that the companies are going to be doing their own as well. I think good business practices will be taking place as a result of what the government is proposing.

1750

Inside of the bill that he's making this kind of conversation about—I'm trying to stay focused on the bill—I think I've taken care of his concerns. The one thing I will agree with him 100% on, and I'm glad that I think I'm hearing they're going to support it, is, will they be better off? Yes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Thornhill.



**Mr. Peter Shurman:** It's a pleasure to add my voice for a couple of minutes to what my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had to say in a veritable compendium of information about the supply of electricity to people in Ontario. He talked about nuclear, he talked about coal and he talked about the feed-in tariffs. He went all over the road, and I think that's a reflection—and I say this to the government side—of the energy policy that, really, nobody on this side, much less the people of Ontario, can really discern as something that has any focus.

If you read the popular press—not what I am saying or any members from over here are saying, but the popular press, people who are commentators, pundits who are looking into this and doing the investigation—what we're seeing is what I'm saying and what my friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is saying, and that is, there's no reliability to much of what's being proposed and much of what is being put into law. What Ontarians want, clearly, is reliable power at an affordable price. At this point, it's very difficult to say with any certainty that that's what they're going to get.

If you take a look at just one thing that I've been looking at over the course of the past six months, it's the feed-in tariff and the model that was used for Ontario to establish this under the Green Energy Act—which was touted as absolutely phenomenal by the one-time minister who proposed the Green Energy Act—and that is Spain, where the feed-in tariff model has been used for about a dozen years now. What's been found—and there are reports that document this; it's not because I say so—is that for every job that was created under this model, two have been lost. That, unfortunately, is what Ontarians have to look forward to, that and about four line items that are going on the bottom of their energy bill for an unpredictable cost of energy going forward. That's why we're losing business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** First of all, I was listening very carefully to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Bill 235 is all about consumer protection. I wish the member would have been here in 2002. He would have seen what his government had done at the time. Today, we are stuck with the costs of upgrading all the generating stations.

But I've lived the experience of dealing with those people, those retailers. At least two to three times per week, I get the consumers coming down to my office. It's unbelievable, the approach those retailers are taking. They tell people that they will pay less for their electricity, which is completely false.

Let me tell you, just because I'm short of time, if I go back to 2002, at that time the previous government had paid up to \$1.33 per kilowatt hour that we had to buy. When we say that they froze the price at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour, we were buying it at \$1.33 a kilowatt hour. Is that good management? I don't think so.

Today, we want to protect all our consumers. This is why this bill is here. I hope everyone on both sides of

the House will support this bill, because it is for our consumers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to give the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound the two minutes that were lost by the absence of the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, so that the two minutes can be allotted to wrap up the debate of the member.

I would seek unanimous consent for that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I heard a no. The member for Toronto–Danforth.

**Interjection:** Who would say no?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I don't know who would say no to you, Mr. Member from Bruce–Grey, but someone did.

Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to start my leadoff on Bill 235, the Energy Consumer Protection Act. As you're well aware, this act addresses two main areas. It addresses the regulation of the sales process and the contracts between energy retailers and the public. This act also regulates the installation and operation of hydro sub-meters in apartment buildings.

On these two main issues, this bill falls short of the need to protect the public. It falls short of the need to protect the public interest, and beyond that, on the second main issue, sub-meters in apartment buildings, it undermines future energy efficiency investment and it puts tenants, particularly those who are poor or elderly, in an extraordinarily difficult position.

I want to start first with the experience of my constituents and of others who've had to deal with energy retailers. Jean-Marc Lalonde was just speaking about his experience in his riding of people who have been told that their electricity bill would be cut if they signed on to these contracts. That is what my constituents have been told. When I have gone into my riding, gone to households that have had energy salespeople come to their door, what they have understood, time after time, is that they're being sold a discount on electricity or gas bills. That's the story that they hear.

When we started this debate in this Legislature, I received emails from my constituents and from people outside my riding with their stories of what they had been told at the door, the experience they had of high-pressure sales and the experience they had of, in one case, finding that they had been signed up to a company and had never signed any documentation to take on a contract with that company. They actually brought in the documents to me showing the signature on a contract with one of these marketers, and I had them show me their other documentation ID to show me that the signature they produced was not the signature that was on that contract.

What we have are very aggressive companies going through this province on a regular basis, household by household, trying to sell these services. People are being taken advantage of. People are signing on to contracts that are giving them very high electricity prices. Frankly, they're sick of it.



I have an email here from a person who wrote in about their experience with these contracts. This person is talking about Universal Energy, and I'll talk more about them in a minute. Universal, in their contract, has this language: "Universal reserves the right to transfer the consumer to standard supply service at any time during the term of this agreement at Universal's sole discretion. Universal is not responsible for any direct or indirect economic or consequential losses caused to you, however caused."

In other words, they come to your door saying, "We're going to give you a fixed price, we're going to cut your costs, and we're going to give you the security of knowing that the price won't go up in the future." But in fact, right in the contract, Universal can cut their relationship with you at any time. You don't have recourse against them. If they find that it's inconvenient or unprofitable to continue to keep their side of the bargain, they can cut you loose and you're cast back into what they consider an abyss. They've given themselves a very neat legal loophole to get out of any contract that isn't making a lot of money for them. That is not a contract that anyone can have any respect for.

You should be aware that Universal Energy recently had to go through a hearing at the OEB, the Ontario Energy Board, for renewal of its gas licence. Instead of being given a five-year renewal, they were given a two-year renewal, with a fair number of conditions. I want to just read to you some of the commentary in the staff report about Universal Energy:

"In board staff's first submission on this application, board staff expressed concern regarding Universal's past conduct. As noted in the first submission, the board published a notice of intention to make an order for an administrative penalty on two occasions—December 22, 2008 and April 23, 2009. The notices indicated a series of infractions which included making false, misleading or deceptive statements to consumers and switching a customer's supply without the customer's explicit authorization."

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craiton, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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**Assemblée législative  
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Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

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(Hansard)**

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des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 14 April 2010**

**Mercredi 14 avril 2010**



Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 14 April 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 14 avril 2010

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RETIREMENT HOMES ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LES MAISONS DE RETRAITE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 13, 2010 on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes / *Projet de loi 21, Loi réglementant les maisons de retraite.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have 27 minutes left. I had completed my presentation in regard to Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes, and with your indulgence I will share my time with my good friend and colleague John O'Toole, the member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased that the member from Cambridge has allowed me to share his time on this bill. Perhaps he and I are two of the people most qualified to comment on the process of aging and the accommodations that will be made in our Ontario society.

I would also say that the bill itself—if you look at the bill as a starter—is a fairly significant bill, about 75 pages. So there are about 35 pages in the English language and a similar number in the French language, and there are nine sections to the bill. What it does is set up a framework for a self-regulating organization to regulate retirement homes.

Now, people could quite easily be confused. Their retirement home is not the same as a long-term-care home. Long-term-care homes in that association, both private as well as not-for-profit long-term care, are regulated today by the government. They set standards and the government funds them, to the tune of—each bed costs around \$40,000 a year. On the long-term-care side, I'm very familiar with it. I'm in a long-term-care home, at least one, every week, as I have power of attorney for my mother-in-law, Madge Hall, who's in Centennial Place in Millbrook. Mr. Leal, the member from Peterborough, knows quite well where that is and probably has been

there as well. I know a lot of people there, because I'm there pretty well every week. It's a stage in life that I don't look forward to, to be quite honest.

They are very, very nicely run. In fact, when we were in government, in the terms of the day, we recognized, coming after 10 years of no investments in aging and long-term care to any great extent—we created 20,000 new long-term-care beds and modernized and renovated an additional, I think, 5,000 or 10,000 long-term-care beds. But you know—and Mr. Speaker, you would probably know this as well—there's a long waiting list for people to get into long-term care. It's a significant problem, because we have an aging population. The demographics, with the baby boomers coming along—we know that we've got an aging population. We've got a problem stacking up how we will take care of these people in the latter stages of their life—and some of them live quite a bit longer than traditionally. I think people used to live to between 75 and 85, and now you'll find many people who are 100 years of age in those facilities.

I'm surprised. I did a little survey in the long-term-care home that I'm familiar with. I went to a party for a 100th birthday. I had a little scroll to present, and I presented the scroll. There were probably 15 or 20 people in the room. Some of them were care providers: PSWs and nurses. So I said, "Mrs. So-and-So is turning 80 today. That's quite a remarkable achievement." She's a very astute lady. She's a former teacher, and quite articulate; in a wheelchair, but quite with it. I said, "Now, how many people in this room would be over 90?" Well, every hand in the room went up. They were all over 90. I said, "How many would be"—I didn't expect there to be many 100-year-olds. Everybody in the room was 100. Unbelievable. In fact, one lady was 103. Unbelievable. So the population is aging, and the point I'm really making here is that we are dealing with a profound surge in health care demand.

On this bill that we are dealing with, Bill 21, I think the member from Cambridge eloquently summarized our concerns—our support, but our concerns for the bill. But if you also look at the budget from a few weeks ago, the Premier said, and he said again in the media yesterday, that in the next 12 years, 70% of all the spending of the province of Ontario will be for health care. They've started a bit of a protracted debate on health care costs. The media covered a bit of that today. The argument with the pharmaceutical companies is the first thrust in that confrontation of taking money away from the providers of health care. That's basically what it's about. We have two choices. We can restrict the amount of money, to avoid



the 70% that goes into health care and to the stakeholders in health care—which would include pharmacists, doctors, nurses, lab technicians and hospital administrators. There's been a lot in the media about how they're going to take on the health care sector. Well, it's clear from the media that they're going to, one by one, pick them off, and they're starting with probably the weakest group, the pharmacists. They're the weakest. They're blaming it on the pharmacists, technically, while we're finding that they should be really aiming at the big pharmaceutical companies, the large, multinational organizations that research and develop drugs. It's hard to figure out just why drugs cost so much. In fact, drugs are the fastest-growing—a 15% increase per year in health care costs.

**0910**

Getting back to the point here, the next big cost driver is the hospital: the stay in hospital, with all of the antibiotic-resistant things that are going on there, the new medications, the new technology, the new diagnostic equipment and the new intervention techniques of laparoscopic surgery. All these new techniques—MRI, CAT scan etc.—cost money. Technology in health care is growing rapidly.

What has that got to do with Bill 21? The real issue here is that what Bill 21 attempts to do, or gives the impression it is doing, is to provide more accommodation for aging persons. In fact, it is. But the subtle difference here is that the person who's going to the retirement home is paying, not the province. That's a huge deal. I can assure you that I am very familiar with the issue. I was in one of the more, I would say, opulent retirement homes in Peterborough—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** They're all there, John.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, there are a lot in Peterborough. I was looking there on behalf of another person I am helping as they age—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Jeff's on the waiting list.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** What is it called? The gardens?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Canterbury Gardens.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Canterbury Gardens in Peterborough—Ross Smith, of AON. He has about five or six of them, and they're beautiful. In fact, Centennial Place is a Ross Smith AON development as well. Canterbury Gardens is \$65,000 a year. Let's put this in perspective—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I need quiet and attention here to make my point.

Here's the real deal: For a person who is retired—let's say an 80-year-old, like the person I know who is looking at it and has a reserve on one of the rooms. To get \$65,000 out of their RRIF, they have to take \$100,000 out, because you have to pay the tax on it—it's coming out of a trust or some kind of fund. So you take \$100,000 out to pay the \$65,000. If you're going to live 10 years, like from 80 to 90, you'd better have \$1 million—I'm serious. It's unbelievable.

If you are 80 years of age and you're being discharged from a hospital after breaking your hip or something like that, and you need convalescent care and there's no room

in long-term care, you may have to go to a retirement home. They're not all going to be \$60,000 or \$65,000, but let's say they're modest places.

The place where my mother-in-law stayed was modest—she was a very modest person from Lakefield at the time. She went to a place—what the heck was it called? It was in Peterborough. Alzheimer's is setting in on me, I suppose. It was about \$40,000 a year.

Any nursing she needed—she did need to have some medication and other medical attention—was paid for on top of the rent. The place was Jackson Creek in Peterborough. You would know it very well, a very lovely spot and all the rest of it. She was there for three or four years, and in that period of time it was \$3,000 a month or maybe a little over—that's \$36,000.

For her to get \$36,000 as disposable cash, she had to cash in \$50,000. In five years, that's 250 grand gone. This is the real point, the subtle point. If a person is going into the long-term care and they're elderly and frail and have no money, here's the very important difference: For the retirement homes that this bill is about, there's no government money at all—zero. To get into long-term care, which is what should be developing, they would take your OAS and your supplement and you would be in a common room—two beds in a room—and all it would cost you would be your old-age security.

You're allowed a personal care allowance—I think it's about \$80 or something like that. Out of all the money you have coming in, you're allowed a personal care allowance, which would cover chewing gum or getting your hair done or things like that. But the province subsidizes it by about \$40,000.

So is Bill 21 actually doing anything? I think Premier McGuinty is introducing private nursing homes; that's what he's doing. It might be the right thing. I think we'll have to debate the bill and hear from the stakeholders.

I don't think there's any flaws in the bill. I'm not qualified to say any more. There are nine sections that I've read; I've looked at the details in those sections only. Let me just comment here, and I'll stick primarily to the bill.

That's the difference: Bill 21 regulates retirement homes; retirement homes are like long-term-care homes but they are not long-term-care homes. If you're in a retirement home and you want care, you pay for it. Get the wallet out because you're paying the nurse or the physiotherapist, whatever, \$50 or \$100 to come and visit you—guaranteed. Aging in Ontario is going to become expensive, and if we think we're going to allow all these people who have income problems to come here and take advantage of that—good luck. We have probably lots of bills facing us in the future. I look at the young people that work here—staff, pages and others—and I'm saying, “Whoa, you're going to be paying for all these old people? Good luck to you.” I hope they're thankful—that's all I can say.

I would say, though, that I think there are good parts, and that's what's most important about the bill that's specific to the discussion here. If you look at part IV, it sets



out a residential bill of rights for retirement homes—very appropriate. Now, what is the status of this today? Retirement homes today range from personal homes where the operator may live there—they may be a nurse, for instance; the ones that I'm thinking of, one of the people there is a nurse. They are very qualified, caring people—that's not the question. They have four or five beds. In fact, the whole house is turned into bedrooms, except the kitchen, basically. Even the garage has been converted into having walkers and appliances needed for the elderly: lifts and ramps and things like that. It's quite nice. I have been in two or three of them, and they are quite home-like. There's not the institutional feel, if you will. Those people are paying out of their pocket, through their old age security, savings and whatever else.

But this bill of rights will be something, I'm sure. "A licensee of a retirement home is required to enter into a written agreement with every resident of the home before the resident commences residency in the home and to give every resident a package of information about the residents' rights by that time. A licensee is also required to make that package of information, along with other information, available in the home. Residents of a retirement home are allowed to establish a residents' council for the home. The council has various powers, such as the power to inform residents of their rights and obligations under the act and to attempt to resolve disputes between the licensee and the residents." There is a care council in long-term care as well. So there are a lot of things that have been copied out of the Long-Term Care Act, which I think is appropriate.

There is more: "Regulations made under the act can set out standards for care and safety in a retirement home, including standards with respect to fire, safety and public health requirements and emergency evacuation plans. A licensee of a retirement home is prohibited from preventing a resident of the home from applying for care services from an external care provider of the resident's choosing." This is very important because right now you might qualify on a discharge plan from a hospital. That's when you are in a state where you've been in a hospital, having had a serious orthopaedic accident of some sort—you break your hip, your knee or your shoulder, whatever—and there would be a nurse and a doctor who would say, "Okay, here's the discharge plan." That plan is a plan of care that would either take you into the community or into long-term care, or in this case a retirement home.

When that happens there's another branch of the LHINs, the local health integration networks, called the CCACs, community care access centres; these CCACs would allocate a certain amount of time—that's another problem, by the way; we'll get into that too—for care in the community. That would be allowed, for them to go into a retirement home, which I agree with. It's important that they're entitled to those services, whether they're in their home or in a retirement home, which in fact is their new home; it's their permanent domicile. I think that's a good provision as well. I think the CCACs don't go into long-term care because they have their own staff, and

then you get into all the union issues about who does what in what location. It's a lot of unionized bunk, actually. Care that is provided by qualified individuals is what is most important, and it is important, in this case, for elderly people.

0920

This is very important, and this will be clarified, I'm sure, by the minister. It says here, "If the resident so requests, the licensee is required to make contacts for the resident with respect to those alternatives." That is, the types of care. "When a resident commences residency in a retirement home, the licensee is required to ensure that the resident is assessed and that a plan of care is developed...." Here is the key: that a plan of care is developed. Who is qualified to do it? Not the person who runs the place, essentially. The province has an assessment process itself—it used to be called the case mix index—to determine how much they paid them per resident per day, based on care. There is a new assessment tool they use, and I think this is really what's important here: how much care is required and are they getting it.

Now it's getting into a bit of the Premier McGuinty nanny-state attitude towards almost everything, really; it's regulating it. Whether it's sushi or what kind of dog you have or you name it, these guys think Father Knows Best has taken over the province, basically, unfortunately. This is a case where I believe there is a reasonable responsibility of the government to provide security and oversight, and this might be stepping right over the top. We'll have to see at the end of the day.

If they were paying for it, it would be different. Really, the departing argument is this: If they recognize there's a problem in the hospitals today with ALC beds—ALC is a common term for alternative level of care. These are often referred to in a very selfish way as bed blockers in the hospitals. That's why people are still on stretchers in the emergency room: because they have people in chronic care in hospitals who should not be there. These alternative-level-of-care beds are basically people who should be in retirement homes, mostly, or in long-term care—more probably long-term care. So where is the money for the long-term care? Where's the money for the aging? Where's the money for seniors? I think this bill is admitting they have no time for seniors.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, look. They have a lot of time for children, for the all-day kindergarten, which is off the rails too, because there's no money in the budget for it, really. There's no money for autistic children, and there's no money for seniors. I think they're only dealing with—I hate to say it; it sounds cruel and harsh—the ones who are vocal and vote; I really do.

I digress a little bit there, but I think I'm bringing it back to the point where I'm looking at the bill. There are some good sections in this. I'm not being critical of the bill, essentially; I'm being critical of the government's shell game of actually not putting any money into seniors' comfort in the waning years of their life. How selfish. Yet we've got hospital administrators making



\$700,000 a year. Half of them make over half a million. Almost all of them make \$300,000 and more. What the heck is going on here? Yet seniors want a few dollars—even if they were to give them a care allowance. I see in the Income Tax Act—I've looked into this, because I'm rapidly approaching this point in life where I need to know these things—that there is a provision where there will be, through the Income Tax Act, federally and provincially—this is very important, and I want the minister to pay attention; there are a couple of ministers here—the caregiver allowance.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no. See, the member who is raising the taxes, the tax increase member, Wilkinson—he's the HST king—is now chirping up. With all the money he's collecting, why doesn't he give some of it to seniors?

Let's get back to the serious point here. I really feel there's a caregiver allowance opportunity here, federally and provincially. Let's look at the sandwich generation. That's the generation between the grandparents and the children. The grandparents are living at 90, the parents are 70 and you've got the children. The intergenerational group, the sandwich generation, is taking care of both of them to the best of their ability while trying to maintain a lifestyle, educating children to university, having an adequate home, trips and all the things we all want today.

I feel that that generation should get this caregiver allowance. If they want to bring their mother, father or loved one into the home and provide appropriate care at the appropriate time in the appropriate place, I think there should be an allowance for modifying their home so the person can get along, or even to make or create a room on the main floor or something—whatever. I think those assistive devices and those kinds of programs should come first, and I think the love and care of a child or family is very important and part of the solution here. I think that is as important as the retirement homes we're discussing in Bill 21.

So I put the caregiver allowance tax credit on the books for the minister to incorporate into this, because that retirement home is their home, and it's going to cost them, as they age, for physiotherapy and even for counselling—counselling of the aging process and being properly cared for. Being cared for is being cared about. It's not just getting your bandage changed or your medication delivered; it's being cared about. Accommodating the family in all this is so important. It even ties into my remark on section 4, dealing with the care plan.

This Thursday, tomorrow, I am doing Bill 3, which is on the Substitute Decisions Act, assigning a power of attorney. That's another case where this should become part of that, because when a person is still in full control of their life and their faculties, they should make decisions about who is the decision-maker for their financial as well as their personal needs, going forward. I think that's very important to avoid abuse of another sort: the abuse of neglect or of someone coming in and taking advantage of a frail person. So I'd like to put in there as

well that there should be some mechanism, perhaps through the doctor when they first notice it and prescribe an anti-dementia drug of some sort. They should be required to advise the family to take some measures to set up a power of attorney option—not mandatory, but an option.

My bill will be debated tomorrow, and I expect that members look forward to trying to eliminate opportunities for abuse in the circumstance of an aging population. I am working with the Durham Regional Police detective John Keating as well as Tammy Rankin from the elder abuse committee in Durham. So I am working on that as well, and I see a lot of this as being good.

In the next section, “a licensee of a retirement home is required to screen applicants” when hiring people as well as volunteers. This is very important, because it's a special requirement, like teachers. I believe that teachers are special people who are gifted and focused on children, and I don't think we need people who have a record of any sort with the legal system. The same thing goes here with a licensed retirement home.

I would also say that inspection is very important: “Part V allows the registrar to appoint inspectors who have certain powers to enter and inspect a retirement home both with and without a warrant....” Warrantless entry? Yes, I guess a person could, with cause, go to court or something and find out why the registrar is picking on them if they've had prior conflicts, if you will.

**0930**

The other part: “Upon receiving a complaint about an alleged contravention of a requirement under this act with respect to a retirement home, the registrar is required to review the complaint and can exercise certain powers....”

“Independently of receiving a complaint, if the registrar believes on reasonable grounds that a licensee has contravened a requirement under the act, the registrar has the power to make certain orders, such as an order to require the licensee to do something....”

I suspect it will be a good system of having a way of resolving disputes, but also due notice to the power of attorney should be appropriate in this bill, not implied. Often these things happen, and it's less and less engagement of the family. The family needs supports to help their aging parents but they also need to be considered as part of the solution. Let's not let Big Brother take over the whole business.

Part VII deals with general matters. There's a provision here on the restriction of disclosure of personal information. This old eHealth—as we all know, the government spent billions of dollars on eHealth, federally and provincially, it turns out, on these Health Infoway administrators. Anyway, there's more to say on this bill and I look forward to the comments on it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to commend the member from Durham for his comments. It appears that he is con-



cerned about his future and where he's going, and he's helping to pave the way for a better environment, I think.

I would have hoped that they would have gone a little more in-depth. When we present our position on this we're going to go into a little more depth. We've done extensive research on this situation and we'd like to share it with the House.

I personally have seen some of the horror stories in old folks homes over the years but I must confess that my mother-in-law was in a facility in Hamilton that was actually quite good. Unfortunately, they were at times understaffed, stressed out and did face some financial problems that the community stepped up and helped out. So there are a lot of things that have to be done in this situation and a lot of things that we want to address.

We're very concerned about this regulatory body that they're forming. We feel it doesn't go far enough. It's almost self-regulating. It's almost like getting the fox to guard the henhouse because it's all industry-motivated and industry people involved in this regulatory body. It's not a fair process. Public consultation will be at a bare minimum. We don't like that either, and we'll be addressing that in the upcoming comments.

The member from Welland will be doing a two-minute hit on this situation as well. I'm sure that with his expertise, his lawyer background and his exposure to people in his community, he will endeavour to enlighten us with some of his famous stories.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes this morning to speak to the bill and certainly to make comments. I did listen intently to the member from Durham. He made a comment about how "the government has no time for seniors." I challenge him to come to eastern Ontario and visit a lady who lives at 4 Gray Avenue in Long Sault—that lady being my mother. She told me last week, "You go back and you tell Premier McGuinty and the Minister of Health what supports I'm getting and how appreciative I am of the supports that I'm getting from the government that Mr. McGuinty leads." I did that last Friday. And I can tell you she is aging at home; she is living in her own home.

Let's get to this bill. You said, "Is there anything in this bill? Is it doing anything?" It certainly is. This bill is establishing mandatory care and safety standards; requiring emergency plans and infection controls and prevention programs; assessing the care needs and care planning for the seniors and whatnot.

You commented about visiting your mother-in-law. I have had many opportunities—I won't anymore because Annie Webber, my grade 12 teacher, passed away on March 30. She was in a retirement home in Cornwall, Chateau Cornwall, an excellent retirement home that would have absolutely no problem with this bill, because they have set their standards high. Annie Webber lived there until the age of 101. I regularly visited with her, and she often commented about the wonderful standards that they had set and how comfortably she was living. But all

across Ontario now, there will be residents' rights. They will know what to expect. This will give the families the comfort, knowledge and understanding that things are being operated properly in the retirement home. So I can speak from experience, and I say our aging at home—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Burlington.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I can't agree more with my colleague from Durham that this is a sidestep to actually providing the kind of care that there are majorly long wait-lists for in Ontario, and that is long-term care. In my area alone, in the LHIN that Burlington belongs to, we have over 3,000 people waiting for long-term-care facilities. People would love to be able to live in their homes, be cared for in their homes and live that independent kind of life, but not all people can do that. This, in my opinion, is a sidestep to dealing with the issue that's really at hand, and that is how to create more long-term-care beds. All this is doing is putting some kind of little fix on alternative care patients being able to move into nursing homes now instead of staying in hospitals, where they're costing us about \$200 million a year for care.

This government doesn't do the right thing. It patches things up. It weaves and bobs and tries to make it look like it's addressing an issue, and it isn't. Seniors are a huge, formidable, growing population in this province. This government has no idea of how to handle it. Their answer to it is to create regulations for nursing homes. Who can argue with that? That's a great idea, but—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Retirement homes.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Sorry, retirement homes; create regulations for retirement homes. But you know, what's happening here is that this move is the first step in creating beds in retirement homes for people on long wait-lists for long-term-care facilities.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm grateful to the member from Durham for his contribution to this debate. I listened carefully to his commentary. I'm even more eager to hear from the NDP critic on seniors' issues, Paul Miller, the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. I know he's frustrated because he's going to get around 35 minutes of his one-hour lead in today. He was disappointed in the fact that the lead is only an hour, because he has so much to say after his analysis of this bill, and the bill is so flawed.

It's Pharisaical, I tell you, for the government to talk about creating a charter of rights for seniors when there's nobody to advocate for those rights. The seniors who are most at risk are the seniors who are frail, the seniors who, as we understand, have begun to suffer from dementia, full-blown dementia or Alzheimer's; seniors who don't have family or friends to support them in their senior years; seniors who are alone. And we ain't seen nothing yet, because the first of the baby boomers are going to turn 65 next year, in 2011. Whether it's health care, whether it's pharmaceuticals, whether it's seniors' care, we ain't seen nothing yet, until 2011, when the first of



those baby boomers, my generation, start to turn 65. For this government to suggest that somehow a charter of rights is going to solve issues of abuse and underservicing for seniors is beyond naive; as I say, it's Pharisaical.

So I say as well that we've got to understand that what this bill does is provide the foundation, the groundwork, for a growing private, for-profit seniors' care sector. This government is throwing in the towel on public services for seniors, and it's prepared to abandon our seniors, now and in the future, to the profit-motivated private sector operators—not little mom-and-poppers; the big corporate operators coming out of the United States. Shame on Dalton McGuinty. Shame on him and his caucus.

0940

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Response? The member for Cambridge.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** On behalf of myself and my colleague the member for Durham, I'd like to thank the members for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Burlington and Welland.

I will be supporting this bill with a number of provisos. Regulation of retirement homes is long overdue; however, this is just another step by this government to privatize our health care system. Their lack of concern for seniors and long-term-care facilities—they don't even give us the right information as to the number of long-term-care facilities built during their tenure. If you read one website of the government and another, they contradict each other. The fact is, they have basically frozen the building of new long-term-care facilities, and these seniors, over the next 10 years, will be flowing into retirement homes.

Let there be no misunderstandings. These privately owned retirement homes will be raising their rates as a result of this regulation. It will be more expensive for seniors, just like what's going on with the drugstore wars with this government. The drugstores are going to get their profits somehow and they're going to raise their prices in other fields, and seniors are going to be paying more for retirement homes. They're going to be paying more at drugstores. We know that they're going to be paying a lot more on their hydro, on their heat, and I'm not even covering the HST and its devastating effect on—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** New Democrats have long called for a regulatory system for retirement homes that protects the rights of vulnerable citizens, ensures adequate services and prevents the abuse of Ontarians living in a retirement home, and would prevent acutely ill patients from being placed in a home that is unable to properly care for them. This government has long told our party and Ontarians that legislation addressing these concerns was on its way and that we'd be happy once it was drafted. We sadly knew that this was not going to be the case—yet another promise not quite kept.

In 2007, the government held a public consultation process, and they've been patting themselves on the back

ever since—a public consultation process that was deeply inadequate. Our concerns that this flawed process would be the basis for the act were well-founded. The consultation process, according to the much-respected legal aid clinic, Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, or ACE, would likely not assist greatly in developing public policy.

In their submission to the consultation process, they warned that this government was not getting it right in the questions you were asking, the definitions you proposed and the regulatory models you were considering.

On May 22, 2007, ACE wrote to the then Minister of Health and minister responsible for seniors, saying, "I am writing to you to express our concerns in respect to the consultation on regulating the retirement home industry that has been conducted by Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. Although we have long encouraged greater regulation of retirement homes, we do not believe that the present consultation and any proposal coming from this consultation will provide appropriate regulation of this industry or appropriate protections for the tenants who live in this type of accommodation."

ACE actually cautioned this government about many provisions that we see in the act today. ACE sent your government a sobering warning, but we see today that your government chose to ignore ACE's expertise. You ignored the expertise of one of the most pre-eminent legal clinics that specializes in these issues.

Again, I quote from the same ACE letter: "The right questions were not asked at this consultation. In particular the question of whether retirement homes are part of the continuum of housing or whether retirement homes should be a parallel system to long-term-care homes offering health services on a private-pay model was not discussed."

The failure to actually have this discussion has led this government to introduce an act that may well do more harm to Ontario's seniors than any good. These failures are evident in Bill 21.

Stakeholders in the early consultation and stakeholders today are extremely concerned with the most fundamental of provisions proposed in this consultation: the regulatory body it proposes. The model they were proposing in the 2007 consultation and, sadly, what we see today is a totally unaccountable, third party regulatory system.

Also, fundamentally, we see that this government has failed to fix the incomprehensible problem of not making fire sprinklers mandatory in all buildings. In spite of the best advice of firefighters and coroners' reports, this government has left the issue of sprinkler retrofits off the table. I will get into this issue in detail later in my remarks.

As I get into some of the details of this bill, I wonder if the government can tell me whether these situations could occur today. I think they could. These are all situations that the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly told the government about. They told you the following stories:

"ACE's clients report concerns about the way medications are stored and distributed. Some of our clients have even reported that volunteers at the retirement home



have access to medication cupboards and are responsible for distributing prescription medication despite the fact that they have no training or expertise.

"We have had clients who experience a health crisis and are taken to hospital, only to find that upon their discharge from hospital, the retirement home refuses to take them back, in effect evicting them with no legal cause under the governing landlord-tenant legislation.

"We have been told that what some retirement homes refer to as 'quarterly nursing assessments' are, in fact, opportunities for the retirement home to sell additional services to the tenants—services which they may or may not actually need.

"We have had clients who have been assaulted by other tenants in their retirement home, and the home's administration does not respond appropriately or at all. One of our clients was sexually assaulted by another tenant in her retirement home, and the home's administration did not call the police or otherwise follow up on protecting our client or the other tenants, because staff took the position that there is no 'corporate policy' on reporting such assaults." Interesting: no corporate policy. Since when does corporate policy supersede the law of this province?

"We have had clients with mobility impairments who tell us that they are 'not allowed' to use the common dining room with the other tenants if they are using their wheelchair or walker, since these devices make other people feel 'old' or 'disabled.' Instead, tenants using wheelchairs or walkers are required to take their meals in their own unit, with an extra charge for 'tray service.' One of our clients, who used an electric wheelchair due to a severe mobility impairment, was told that she was not allowed to use her wheelchair in the hallways of the retirement home, and could only use it within her own unit." I don't know what use the chair would be, if that's the case. "Aside from being a clear violation of human rights legislation, these reactions from retirement homes seem illogical given the clientele they purport to serve."

Has your government introduced safeguards to make sure these situations could not happen after the bill passes? I don't think so.

New Democrats and Ontarians have waited far too long for this bill, but we have waited in the hope that the McGuinty Liberal government would actually make some meaningful change for the vulnerable Ontarians who must live in this sector. For too long, seniors have been in retirement homes without adequate medical care and without safeguards in place to prevent abuse. We know that, tragically, Ontarians have lost their lives because of this government's unwillingness to move on these important issues, from inappropriate transfers of high-needs patients to retirement homes, to sprinkler retrofits.

Ontario's chief coroner released a report that talked about this in September 2009. He was looking at the death of an elderly woman transferred to a retirement home as an alternate-level-of-care patient with acute

health care needs. The recommendations of the chief coroner include:

"(30) Programs in private care or retirement homes in the province of Ontario providing care to frail elderly residents awaiting placement in a licensed long-term-care home should be held to the same standards for care and services as a licensed long-term-care home. Implicit in this recommendation is the need to ensure the same regulations and inspections with regular public reporting of findings that exists for licensed long-term-care homes."

"(31) Private care homes or retirement homes in the province of Ontario should be subject to regulations, oversight, and regular inspection by a public sector agency in order to ensure that care and safety needs are met. The guiding priority should be the care and safety needs of the frail elderly, and not the type of facility in which the placement occurs."

#### 0950

Can the government tell me this: Have you implemented these suggestions? I don't think so. Have you met the call of Ontario's chief coroner? Sadly, while this government has dawdled, elderly Ontarians have been put at risk. In some cases, such as those noted above, some have tragically died. This should be the time that all of this changes. However, New Democrats are extremely frustrated that this is not the case.

The bill before us gives the illusion of regulation, but it will do nothing for Ontario's vulnerable seniors. It introduces a toothless—I repeat, toothless—regulatory model. It does not deal with the reality of having health care services delivered in a facility that is not regulated by any appropriate standards.

This is what the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly had to say about the idea that retirement homes would offer the same level of care as long-term-care homes:

"Originally we assumed that the consultation would be in respect to retirement homes in a continuum, but after attending the consultation it would appear that the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat and the retirement industry want to promote a particular understanding of 'aging in place,' which we take to mean that retirement homes could offer the same level of care services as long-term-care homes, as long as the tenants were willing to pay privately for that care. If that is the case, that would mean, in our opinion, that the government intends to promote what is in effect two-tier medicine."

Let's be very clear about this: This legislation simply defines retirement homes as a residential facility that provides two or more care services. There is no cap on the care that retirement homes can offer. There's nothing in this legislation that prevents retirement homes from offering the exact same level of care as a long-term-care facility.

Let's be even more clear: This government and the NDP, of course, say they are in favour of a strong regulatory system for long-term-care homes. It is important to note that New Democrats are sadly disappointed by the long-term-care regulations that this government has recently finalized, but that is a different story. The point



is that the government seems to agree that Ontarians deserve an ironclad system of regulations to protect vulnerable residents in long-term care. For some reason, when a senior with the same health care needs is put into a retirement home, they do not seem to need the same protection—puzzling, to say the least.

In Bill 21, there is no cap on the care residents can receive, so all of a sudden Ontarians can receive health care services in a retirement home without any real regulations governing the kind of care they are being provided. This is insanity. It defies common sense. It will leave Ontarians vulnerable to terrible situations. How can the government purport to be protecting vulnerable residents in long-term-care facilities and presumably in retirement homes when they are not dealing with the very, very basic issue?

New Democrats have many concerns about this legislation. We have long called for a strong regulatory system, and we see virtually nothing here to be happy with. This is a consumer protection bill, and while we support consumer protection, this bill is not what we've been calling for and will not fix the problems we have today in the retirement homes sector.

Informing residents of the services offered is important, but it does nothing—I repeat, nothing—to ensure adequate health care services, if that is what the home will be offering. In fact, we know that under the care homes act, residents were already supposed to be given a package of information of services that were available, so what is new about these regulations? This government seems to be living in a smoke-and-mirrors fantasy world.

If retirement homes were simply residential facilities, this would be an okay piece of legislation. But the reality is that, increasingly, Ontarians are living in these facilities when they have serious health care issues. That is why there are provisions for a secure unit, something which I will talk about in a bit, but clearly there is an acknowledgement that there are individuals with dementia, for example, living in these buildings.

But instead of looking at this reality and planning for the increasing demand on both our retirement homes and long-term-care homes, this government is acting as if the world of retirement homes is not changing and will not change. New Democrats are very concerned that the bill before us today is setting the stage for a second tier of long-term care, just like the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly cautioned you about almost three years ago.

We are concerned because we see no cap on the health care services that could be offered by retirement homes—a system designed for the wealthy who can afford to pay for all the services they need. Because of Bill 21, staffing requirements and hours have been ignored. Continuity of care is also off the table. We hear that a care plan has to be developed—but again, no teeth, no enforcement; no staffing or training requirements; no regulations when it comes to issues like bathing, nursing care, dispensing of medications and so on.

We are very concerned that this weak regulatory system that places few obligations on operators will lead to

long-term-care homes deciding to re-designate as a retirement home to get around the regulations. There's nothing preventing them from doing this and they only have a huge profit to gain from moving to the retirement home sector.

We are concerned that this government will start relying on the under-regulated private retirement home market to deliver the care that should be delivered in a long-term-care facility. This could easily be a slippery slope in a two-tiered system of long-term care. Why do we bother regulating long-term care so strictly if we have no strong mechanisms to regulate a retirement home? And they may be essentially delivering the same services.

Once again, as ACE says, "One of the reasons the public is so concerned about retirement home regulation is that some retirement homes have been running as 'bootleg' or underground long-term-care homes, in effect serving people with the same high health care needs as in long-term care but not subject to any of the oversight or rules associated with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Although retirement homes are essentially a 'private' relationship between the operator-as-landlord and the tenant, it is the health care aspect of the retirement home that gives it a 'public' character to many observers."

But there is no action on this today, in spite of the fact that many stakeholders have told you the same thing: Ontario has long needed regulation of retirement homes because of the increasing health care issues. Yet this bill totally ignores the reality of health care in these facilities. It's alarming.

Can this government say that Ontarians are happy with the care of elderly and vulnerable residents to be transferred to what will remain a totally unregulated health care environment? I don't think so.

There are a number of serious omissions in this legislation, and I now want to talk about the regulatory model that this bill creates, because New Democrats think it is inherently flawed. We see no mechanism for ensuring adequate transparency or accountability. There is nothing preventing it from being an industry-dominated board that only answers to itself—once again, the fox guarding the henhouse. In fact, it seems designated to do exactly that. It is a regulatory body that will be setting its own regulations—interesting. It will be hiring its own inspectors—very interesting—employees who will depend on the regulatory body for their paycheques. That's interesting: "You answer to me, and I pay you." Did you forget to look at something? I don't know. It will be dealing with residents' complaints. In fact, residents will have no other recourse if something goes wrong other than to go to this unaccountable, industry-dominated regulatory model. Whoa. That kind of cuts off your options, doesn't it?

It is no surprise, then, that the system of inspection and compliance looks very weak. There are no teeth in this model. One would hope that the government has learned from its mistakes from models like the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. New Democrats warned that



this would be a deadly model, that there was too much room for abuse and shortcuts. We knew the safety of Ontarians was threatened, and, sadly, we saw this become a reality with the explosion at Sunrise Propane in August 2008. It yet again emphasized the need for accountable, third party oversight. Why has this government decided to bury its head in the sand and create a terrible opportunity for abuse and human suffering yet again?

As I was speaking about earlier, New Democrats want a regulatory system that ensures Ontarians in retirement homes who are receiving health care services are entitled to the same standards and regulation that they would find in another health care facility. The government has totally ignored these issues.

1000

The issue of downloading the ALC patients to retirement homes is not dealt with. I was told that downloading of ALC patients to retirement homes is dealt with in the Long-Term Care Homes Act. This doesn't make sense. There needs to be explicit provisions in the act that account for these kinds of transfers.

As I go through the act, I see many other concerns and oversights. For quite some time now, I've raised my concerns about mandatory sprinkler systems in every retirement home and every resident suite. A review of the newspaper stories about retirement home fires and the injuries to and the deaths of too many seniors have prompted not only family members but those emergency services personnel who worked those fires to call for mandatory sprinkler systems in retirement homes. These government members know that even the coroners' inquests recommend mandatory sprinklers in retirement homes. Despite knowing all of these well-investigated and well-thought-out recommendations, the McGuinty Liberals have not taken even a baby step toward implementing these life-saving recommendations.

There have been three coroners' inquests: for the 1980 fire at Extendicare Mississauga, where 25 residents died; for the 1995 fire at Meadowcroft in Mississauga, where eight residents died; and for the 1997 fire at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in the veterans' wing, where three died. Each of these inquests called for retroactive installation of sprinkler systems in all retirement, nursing and long-term-care homes. It didn't happen, and it still isn't going on today.

Will this government be held responsible for the next tragedy that happens in our province for lack of regulations and lack of supporting safety and health that they claim they do all the time? Are they going to be responsible for the next set of seniors that unfortunately are exposed to these types of situations and meet with death or serious injury? What are they going to do? We're bringing it to their attention now. We're telling them to do something now to stop this from happening. I'll be the first one to stand up if another senior dies because there's no sprinkler system. I'll be the first to go after them, and I'll remind them about this day, about this speech and about this request. Let's hope it doesn't fall on deaf ears as we continue.

I look at these statistics, these recommendations, and at Bill 21, and I can't help but ask this question: Did those 36 seniors die in vain? Last week, in a response to my question in this House, I said, "How many more lives have to be sacrificed before this government does the right thing, steps up to the plate and legislates mandatory sprinkler systems in all retirement homes immediately?" The Minister of Community Safety responded this way: The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association President Fred LeBlanc wrote to him, saying, "We are concerned that there will be too much emphasis on and faith placed in technology, resulting in a false sense of security." The minister continued:

"They are not a magic bullet. They are only one of the many tools required to adequately protect the residents in the event of a structural fire.

"We agree with the professional firefighters that they're an important tool, but they are only one tool in the arsenal to fight fires."

That's an interesting statement by the minister. Apparently, there appears to be a difference of opinion. I'd like to know why the minister has chosen to ignore the three coroners' inquests and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs? Both of them call for mandatory sprinkler systems in retirement homes. I would like the minister to explain, in the circumstances of these specific retirement home fires, what tools other than automatic sprinklers would have saved those 36 seniors? If it's not so important, what would they have in place that would have prevented this?

Their own people are telling them—the Toronto and Mississauga fire departments are two of the largest staffed fire departments in Canada. The response times to these fires were well under industry standards, and the buildings complied with the existing codes. Yet 36 seniors died.

If the minister is really concerned that there will be too much emphasis on and faith placed in technology, resulting in a false sense of security, why did this government amend the Ontario building code to require the installation of sprinklers in all new residential buildings three storeys or higher? What's good for the goose should be good for the gander, but it doesn't appear that way.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, NFPA, there has never been a multi-fatal fire in a retirement home that has working sprinkler systems. I'm going to repeat that: According to the National Fire Protection Association, there has never been a multi-fatal fire in a retirement home that has working sprinkler systems—never. So I guess that tool is a very important tool. Those fire victims should have been able to depend on mandatory government legislation so that their lives might have been saved.

More recently, just two years ago, in April 2008, there was a Rowanwood retirement home fire in Huntsville. Thank heavens for the staff and two off-duty Hamilton police officers who were driving by and helped to evacuate the 56 residents without injury. Without the good fortune of those police officers driving by late at night



and being able to help, what would the outcome have been? No one knows. Just 14 months ago, the retirement home fire in Orillia where two residents died and 11 were sent to hospital—the firefighters who were on the scene at these horrific retirement home fires said that the retirement homes should have had sprinkler systems. The firefighters who were at the fire said they should have had sprinkler systems.

In the *Toronto Star*, on January 19, 2009, Fire Marshal Pat Burke is quoted as follows: “This is an extremely tragic fire because it occurred in one of Ontario’s most vulnerable occupancies.... This fire has been overwhelming to the fire service, the families and the community.... We want to look at ways to prevent this from ever happening again.” This is an opportunity to prevent this from ever happening again. This is the opportunity to amend Bill 21 and to include mandatory sprinkler systems in every retirement home in this province.

CBC news on January 21, 2009, referring to the Muskoka Heights retirement home fire, notes that “the fire has also raised the issue of sprinkler systems inside care facilities in Ontario.

“Under current legislation, only newly built facilities are required to install sprinklers. The Muskoka Heights retirement home was more than 50 years old and did not have a sprinkler system.

“John Galt, of the Fire Sprinkler Alliance, said the injuries and deaths in Orillia are ‘another needless tragedy that didn’t need to happen. These are lives that could have been saved with modern sprinkler technology.’”

Referring to the 1995 Meadowcroft inquest, once again the CBC reported that “in the wake of the fire, a coroner’s inquest recommended all new nursing homes should install sprinklers. But it also said all existing nursing homes should be retrofitted with them.”

The media gets it. The fire chiefs get it. Senior organizations get it. We get it. But they don’t get it. The government doesn’t get it or is ignoring it. I don’t know how much more proof they need. Let’s get on with it. Let’s protect our seniors. It’s just amazing. How many more lives are going to be lost before the McGuinty Liberals, the majority government, finally do the right thing and amend Bill 21, your act to regulate retirement homes, to make sprinkler systems mandatory in every retirement home in this province?

In addition to this terrible—I repeat, terrible—oversight, the government has not dealt with the contradictions among various pieces of legislation. For instance, can a person be detained in a secure unit—this is permitted in the act—although retirement homes continue to fall under the Residential Tenancies Act? Can a person be detained in their own home? I don’t see anything in the legislation that will ensure that the financial security of seniors is protected; nothing to prevent the abuse of seniors by homes who have taken over their financial matters. Again, no public oversight, no transparency and no accountability.

I think there’s also a serious issue when it comes to the resident councils that this act creates. It does not

make sense that if a resident wants to pass on their seat to a family member or appoint a person to sit on their council on their behalf, they’re not allowed. Why is this? What reason can the McGuinty government provide for this? I don’t get it.

In general, this is a very weak bill that treats retirement home residents as nothing more than tenants with a few extra services on the side. The reality is that the population of Ontario is rapidly aging, and many of these homes are increasingly providing health care services. I look at this and it just boggles my mind that the oversight is terrible. They don’t deal with the issues that are extremely important. The government is ignoring the realities and is failing Ontario’s most vulnerable seniors.

All that New Democrats have long called for is the regulation of retirement homes. We’re not happy to have this less-than-adequate bill in front of us today. Instead of strong regulations and protections, we see more of the same from this government: evasion and lip service to life-and-death issues.

New Democrats will be working with groups like the Registered Nurses’ Association, the Service Employees International Union and the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly to make sure that this government gets this regulatory model right. We want to make sure that there are full public hearings on this legislation. We want to hear from all the seniors’ groups, the resident councils, the health care experts, the front-line workers, the legal aid clinics and so on about what this bill has failed to provide and how it can be fixed. New Democrats sincerely hope that this government is willing to acknowledge their oversights in this bill and consider the amendments that we will be proposing. We are deeply concerned that Bill 21 is going to leave vulnerable Ontarians even worse off than before. That would be a huge tragedy to all in this province and in this country.

Hopefully, once again, we’ll be going to committee. Once again, it’ll be five Liberals, two Conservatives and one NDP, and I’m pretty sure that all our amendments will fall on deaf ears even if they’re good, even if they’re positive, even if they make a difference.

Once again, I’d like to say—I’ll reiterate—that when I came to this Legislature for the first time, in the first week I was here the Premier stood up in this House and said, “I welcome the new members to this House. We are here to serve the people of Ontario. We are here to work together to help the people of this province and improve the living conditions in this province.” Well, I must confess I’ve been extremely disillusioned since that statement, because everything we bring forward gets shot down unless it’s their idea—and you know what? Amazingly, a few months later, our ideas show up and it’s the government’s brilliant idea that they came up with. Unbelievable. You know, he stated to me that we had to work together—no partisan politics; he wanted to work together. That’s a myth, sir; it’s a myth. It’s not that way. And the sooner the public realizes that, the better off this province will be.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 8, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Introduction of guests?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Speaker, just bear with me.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I could rule the honourable member out of order for using that BlackBerry to give those names.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I would like to welcome to Queen's Park today a couple of constituents who came down to have lunch with me, Mr. and Mrs. Upton.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to ask unanimous consent for all members of the chamber to wear the Save Transit City buttons today during this session.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? I heard a no.

The member from Mississauga South.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** My colleague Mr. Dan Schiedel, owner of Advanced Battery Systems Inc., and an old schoolmate of mine from university, is here in the House. I'd just like to welcome him to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I believe the parents of the page for my riding are here in the Legislature, the parents of Khaleel Rajwani. There they are. Welcome to the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome to the Legislature today Rod Hurd, who is the brother of our Clerk, Deb Deller, and also Gregor MacAuley, from Australia, visiting today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery, from my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, I'd like to welcome Kory Preston and his colleagues from Wilfrid Laurier University who are visiting Queen's Park today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'd like to introduce a number of people in the members' gallery who are here from the Save the Met Site Coalition. We have Ben Lefebvre, Denis Courvette, along with Gilles Nugent and Bill McGillis, and I forget—Brian? The other one, anyway. I'd like to welcome them, and I'm sure they are going to get themselves known by members around here. Thank you.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Premier. The Ontario PC caucus has a plan that sets out

straightforward and practical solutions to improve transparency in all corners of Ontario's government. Our plan calls for freedom of information to apply to all provincial public bodies and for proactive posting of government expenses and contracts over \$10,000.

My question is this: Why is Premier McGuinty ignoring our plan?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this. I had the opportunity as well to chat a little bit about it here in this venue just yesterday. We will take a close look at the plan. They just put it out yesterday. I think, in fairness, we deserve a bit of time to gain a better understanding of what they're proposing.

But what I said yesterday, and I'll repeat today, is that we find it passing strange, given that all of the measures that we have put in place that bring about heightened accountability and transparency have been rejected by the official opposition. Whether it was expanding the role of the auditor, expanding freedom-of-information requests, putting in place our Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act or preventing a party from ever hiding a deficit, again, those have all been rejected in the past by this opposition.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Instead of adopting our plan, the Premier wants to play silly games with this. When asked about shining a light on contracts and expenses, he says he shines a light on class sizes and patient safety rates. Why is posting information on class sizes and patient safety rates a good thing, but posting government expenses and contracts over \$10,000 not a good thing?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The fact of the matter is that we're moving in both directions at the same time. With respect to freedom of information, we've expanded coverage to cover OPG, Hydro One, universities and cancer care. We think those are good, progressive initiatives, and it would be nice to have the support of the official opposition in that regard. We've expanded the role of the auditor so that he can now conduct value-for-money audits on our hospitals, our schools, our universities and our long-term-care homes. Again, I would invite the official opposition to lend support to those kinds of initiatives.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Ontario families have to wonder why the Premier is so strenuously resisting greater transparency about what the McGuinty Liberals are up to. Premier McGuinty was boasting about the merits of expanding freedom of information over OPG and Hydro One, but he doesn't want to apply it to all provincial bodies. He boasts about rules for travel and hospitality expenses for 22 of over 600 agencies, but he doesn't want to post the information so the public can police them. Why is Premier McGuinty okay with accountability some of the time and for some agencies, but afraid to let the public scrutinize what the McGuinty Liberals are up to across government?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I think our record speaks for itself. We've been making real progress when



it comes to introducing further accountability and transparency.

One of the things that we're working on of late, although it appears that the official opposition has not cottoned on to this yet, is accountability and transparency with respect to drug prices. We want to get drug prices down for our families. This is good news for the people of Ontario. Whether you're paying through the public plan as a taxpayer, through a private plan as an employee, or if you're paying out of pocket directly because you don't benefit from any particular plan, this is good news. It would be great to know where the official opposition stands on this effort on our part to introduce transparency and accountability and get drug prices down for Ontario families

### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is for the Minister of Government Services. Yesterday in question period, Premier McGuinty said that his new rules for hospitality expenses applied to "our 22 biggest agencies and our LHINs." But the Integrity Commissioner's office told us that they do not review LHIN expenses. My question to you is, who do we believe: the Premier, or the Integrity Commissioner that we just reappointed yesterday?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I think it's important for me to recap what our government has done in terms of improving accountability for the people of Ontario.

As a part of our commitment to greater transparency and accountability, we have expanded the powers of the Auditor General. We have also brought Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation and Ontario universities under the freedom-of-information act. We have increased transparency for 22 agencies whose expenses will be reviewed by the Integrity Commissioner. That has already been done, and the processes are in place to make that happen.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The fact remains that Minister Takhar knows the LHINs are one of 600 public bodies that have no one monitoring their expenses. He knows that, and he didn't answer the question. That means no one is looking at LHINs and seeing if they're reimbursing limousine rides, like eHealth did for Sarah Kramer. No one is scrutinizing the LHIN expenses to catch claims of \$75 cupcakes or a staff outing like the one at Cancer Care Ontario that cost us \$10,000. No one knows if LHINs are reimbursing their boards, staff or consultants for GPS systems, like the WSIB did for Steve Mahoney.

My question, back to the minister: Why did the Premier say the Integrity Commissioner is scrutinizing LHIN expenses when she is not?

1040

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** My understanding is that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has already written to the LHINs, and they have agreed to post all their expenses online. In addition to that, the 22 agencies' expenses will be sent to the Integrity Commissioner and

she will be reviewing their expenses. If there are any expenses she is not satisfied with, those expenses will be reimbursed by those agencies. We have moved ahead to actually put a lot of controls in place to make sure that all these expenses are the right expenses and the right people are being reimbursed for those expenses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Again, the Integrity Commissioner's office told us that she is not reviewing the expenses of the LHINs. Records that the PC caucus has obtained through freedom of information reveal that the LHINs are following the same set of policies that got the CEOs at eHealth and OLG fired. The South West LHIN paid over \$4,000 to Liberal-friendly consultants of Courtyard without any receipts. The North West LHIN reimbursed \$19,000 to consultants without any documentation. If expenses were posted online, the public could enforce the rules. Premier McGuinty is not adopting our PC plan for greater oversight and accountability for these types of expenses.

My question back to the minister, and I hope he answers it: How will Minister Takhar enforce travel and accountability rules at the LHINs and the other 600 public—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I have a letter that the minister wrote to the LHINs on February 4, and she wrote it to all the LHINs. It says that, "LHINs should take the proactive step of posting the expenses of their board and senior management online on a go-forward basis. This is similar to a requirement for 22 of Ontario's largest agencies under the Public Sector Expenses Review Act." They have agreed to do it.

In addition to that, I think the member made reference to the WSIB. The WSIB is among the top 22 agencies whose expenses for the top five officials will be sent to the Integrity Commissioner.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Toronto families are feeling betrayed after being told that the McGuinty government is backing away from its promised support for public transit projects in their city. My question is a simple one: Did the Premier consult with Toronto MPPs in his own caucus before he derailed the plans for Toronto's new light rail system?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My colleague needs to understand—and I've said this a few times before, and I'm not sure how I can introduce further clarity to this. We remain absolutely committed to making the investments that we have spoken about in the past into public transit in the city of Toronto and beyond. What we have done is taken into account our financial circumstances. We've taken into account the consequences on our finances of a global recession. We've decided that we need to stretch out that investment over a longer period of



time. I would implore, once again, my honourable colleague to understand that that is the appropriate and responsible thing to do in the circumstances.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Let's be clear. What the Premier is saying is that Toronto families have to wait. They have to keep waiting at their stops, they have to keep missing dinner with their kids and they have to stay sitting in gridlock throughout the city. He thinks it's more important to hand out another corporate tax cut and build a private diesel train to the airport, but the member from Eglinton–Lawrence vehemently disagrees with the Premier on this matter. On his website it says: "Build the Eglinton LRT now." Did the Premier consult with this member, a former TTC commissioner, before he derailed the plans for the Toronto transit system?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm not sure what more I can say, except that we plan to move ahead. We're waiting now for the best advice from Metrolinx with respect to how we might schedule that. There may be better news than my colleague is anticipating on that score, in terms of how quickly we can move ahead.

Let me tell you about what we have done as a sign of our commitment. We've invested, province-wide, \$9.3 billion so far in public transit, which represents about \$9.3 billion more than the previous government put in. With respect to the city of Toronto, we've also invested \$3.5 billion. We're also turning over a portion of the provincial gas tax, and that has provided Toronto with \$688 million, over the first five years of the program, for them to in turn invest in public transit.

So I think, by any objective measure, we continue to be seen to be very supportive of public transit.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Toronto residents were counting on the Premier to keep his word to improve their lives and build their city.

I'll quote one Toronto resident: "I know this new LRT will make a huge difference to the people living in my community, whether they're commuting home in time to watch a daughter's soccer game or looking for a better way to make a doctor's appointment."

That was the member for Don Valley East speaking about the Finch LRT. Did the Premier consult with him or the rest of his caucus of Toronto MPPs before breaking his promise on Transit City, or does he take his Toronto MPPs for granted the same way he takes Torontonians for granted?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, we remain absolutely committed, as a caucus and as a government, to moving ahead with public transit in the city of Toronto. I've listed some of our initiatives in that regard.

I'll remind my honourable colleague that there is digging under way at present for a new subway extension that their party voted against. We're talking about an \$870-million investment to extend the TTC subway to York region. Two tunnelling machines have been pur-

chased, the work is under way, and we look forward to doing more at the earliest possible opportunity.

## PENSION PLANS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier, as well. Yesterday at a major pension conference here in Toronto, Jim Leech, the CEO of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, delivered a very important speech. He said, "The truth is that" defined benefit "plans are far better vehicles for pension saving from both a security and a cost basis for both employees and sponsors."

Ontario's finance minister is in fact addressing that very conference this morning. Will he lead a spirited fight for secure, affordable pension plans in this province? Or will this government cave to the banks and insurance companies and endorse the very option that Mr. Leech warned us against yesterday in his speech?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** This is an issue we've been talking about for quite some time, at least two years now. It's something that I've raised with my counterparts from across the country. It's something that I've raised directly with the Prime Minister.

I think we can take a little bit of heart in the recent initiatives put forward by the federal Minister of Finance, who is now on a tour across the country—there are at least three venues he's visiting—to speak to Canadians to get a better understanding of the consequences of the lack of adequacy when it comes to retirement incomes.

We look forward to being part of what I believe rightly should be a federal initiative, a national response to a national challenge. Again, we'll continue to work with the federal government and our counterparts across the country.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In his speech, Mr. Leech pointed out that the group RRSPs and defined contribution plans that are administered by banks and insurance companies carry very large administrative fees, fees that can reduce retirement savings by up to 30%.

There are only two sides to this historic pension debate: On one side we have the defenders of secure, public, cost-effective defined benefit plans; on the other, the expensive, private option being promoted by the banks and insurance companies. It's time for the McGuinty government to get off the fence. Which side is the Premier on?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just think it's a little early for us to try to pigeonhole the various options here. I'm not even sure if all the options are yet on the table. I think it's a little early in that regard.

I think one thing that we need to be—and I encourage my colleague to do the same—is honest with Ontarians and Canadians. Whatever we do, there will be an additional cost to employees when it comes to setting some money aside. If there's any consensus among economists out there, it's that we are saving too little. We shouldn't be captivated by some imaginary notion that that saving



will be done by somebody else. We'll have to set more money aside in some way, shape or fashion, and that's part of the conversation we're going to have with Canadians.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That honesty and clarity is exactly what I'm seeking from this Premier. In a few weeks, Canada's finance ministers are in fact going to meet to decide on the future of retirement savings in this country, and he knows that. For the two thirds of working Ontarians who have no workplace pension, the outcome of this meeting is extremely important.

New Democrats have come down firmly on the side of public defined benefit pension plans. We support expanding the CPP and have also proposed a made-in-Ontario solution in the form of our own, very-well-received Ontario retirement plan.

We stand with the four million Ontarians without pensions. Does the Premier stand with them or with the banks and insurance companies?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I stand for a thoughtful consultation and deliberative process so that we can get the best options before us and we can do what is in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

I know that my honourable colleague is concerned about costs for our families. We've embarked upon a very important initiative to reduce the cost of drugs for Ontario families. At one point or other in our lives, we're going to need access to prescription medication. It would be great to know where the NDP stands on this very important issue. The initiative we put forward will save money for all our families, whether they're paying for drugs directly out of pocket, through an employment plan of some kind or as a taxpayer through a public plan.

It's in everybody's interests that we find a way forward on this. It would be great to know whether the NDP is in fact on the side of families in this important initiative in getting their drug costs down.

## PHARMACISTS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Premier. You are cutting almost a billion dollars in health care in the front-line services that pharmacists provide. That's a billion-dollar cut. That's what Premier McGuinty wasted on the Liberal-friendly consultants in the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle. What front-line health care should Ontario patients expect Premier McGuinty to cut next?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very happy to have the opportunity to talk about the reforms we're making in our drug plan in the province of Ontario.

Let's be really clear: This is all about getting fair prices for drugs for the people of Ontario. It's about getting lower prices and it's about expanding the access to drugs for people in this province who need drugs to be

healthy or to stay healthy. This is absolutely the right thing to do.

It's also about cleaning up a system of payments that were paid from generic companies to pharmacy owners in exchange for stocking those drugs on their shelves. It cleans up that system. It allows us to pay directly for those front-line services that are so enormously valuable, services provided by those front-line pharmacists.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** We think it's important for Ontario patients and families to know that, in actual fact, the McGuinty government is holding Ontario patients hostage in its PR war against pharmacists. The McGuinty Liberals are vilifying pharmacists, but most of these trusted health professionals operate in small operations and can't afford the costs that you're downloading onto them. Some will have to reduce the number of hours they're able to open, but the fact of the matter is that others are going to be forced to close. Ontario patients are going to pay the price for this.

Why are you holding Ontario patients hostage in your fight to cut the front-line services that our pharmacists provide?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am frankly astonished that the Conservative Party has chosen to side with Big Pharmacy on this issue. I tell you, we are on the side of patients on this issue, and that is why, standing with us, we have CARP, the advocacy organization for seniors. We have the Canadian Cancer Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation supporting this. We have organized labour—Sid Ryan stood with me as we announced these changes.

These are the right changes. It will allow us to offer more drugs for more people. It's the right—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me describe—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Renfrew: You silenced, I sat, and then I heard you again. Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me demonstrate what a difference this will make for people once these changes are implemented. A person diagnosed with depression on a drug called citalopram currently pays \$346 a year. Under the new plan, they will pay \$114 a year. That is a savings of \$232 for a person who needs the drug to be healthy.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Premier. On February 17, the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal ordered the government to increase special diet allowance rates for special assistance recipients with various medical conditions within three months. Instead of increasing those rates, the McGuinty government, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, is asking for a one-year



extension so it can eliminate the special diet allowance and reduce the same benefits that were awarded.

Why won't the government comply with the Ontario Human Rights Commission ruling and provide adequate special diet allowance payments as ordered?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** This is a very good question. The government will comply with the decision of the Human Rights Tribunal. We need more time to investigate and to see who qualifies for this new addition, to respect the decision of the human rights. That's the only reason we will comply with the decision of the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** That is not the case at all. The assistant deputy minister has filed an affidavit that set out exactly the opposite of what you have just said: that they are asking for the year in order to eliminate the program.

This minister is refusing to answer the question. She implies that the current special diet allowance is not medically based, and she has said that before. Of course it is. Recipients must have specific medical conditions in order to receive the allowance.

The tribunal decision clearly states that the special diet allowances are inadequate. This arrogant government responds by doing away with the allowance altogether and effectively cutting the special assistance rates up to 20%. This is nothing less than cruelty. Why does this government think it is above the decision of the Human Rights Tribunal?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The question that was asked by my colleague was: Why have we asked for some time? First of all, you're partly right. We will appeal part of the decision, but there is another part that we will comply with, so we're asking for more time. Why are we asking for more time? It's because we need to review all the applications for a part of the special diet, and we need more time. We'll appeal one part, but the other part we will comply with, and we need more time to make the right decision and give those claimants what they deserve under the decision of the human rights.

## PHARMACISTS

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I've been hearing from my constituents a lot about the government's proposed drug reforms, many of whom are supportive of lower generic drug prices. I've also heard from some pharmacies that are concerned about the proposed removal of professional allowances, the payments from generic drug companies to pharmacies for stocking their products. Some have said that they use this money to provide services and are concerned about how they will continue to provide those services. In fact, just last night at an event I attended, I heard from a pharmacist who owns a couple of Shoppers Drug Mart franchises. He is concerned he will not be compensated for the counselling and educational services he provides to his clients.

I understand that the government's plan includes new funding for professional services. Can the minister please provide more details about this funding?

1100

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I want to make it very clear that pharmacies will be fairly compensated for providing the patient care they provide. Lowering the cost of drugs puts us in a better position to fund these kinds of vital patient services in the future.

We know that pharmacists want to use their full range of skills. Pharmacists are highly trained health professionals and a vital part of our health care system. Through our reforms, we are ensuring that pharmacies are fairly compensated by helping patients, by increasing dispensing fees and by paying for additional services provided to patients. We're committing \$246 million for the following: \$124 million to increase dispensing fees to pharmacists; \$100 million in new investments to compensate pharmacists directly for services they provide, in addition to the \$50 million already allocated—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm glad that I'll be able to provide more details to my constituents and ensure them that we will be fairly compensating pharmacies for the important services that they provide.

Pharmacists are professionals who have the training and expertise to play a larger role as health care providers. I understand that, with the passage of legislation in December, medical professionals, including pharmacists, are poised to take on expanded scopes of practice. Fully utilizing the skills of our medical professionals is critical to providing the best health care for Ontarians.

With the new funding for pharmacists' professional services, my constituents will want to know what services they can receive from their local pharmacists. Can the minister please tell this House about the changes to the scope of practice for pharmacists?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member for her question. These changes, these reforms, build on Bill 179 that was passed last year to give Ontarians better access to health care and more choices in who provides it. The changes expand the scope of practice for pharmacists, enabling them to more fully utilize their skills for the benefit of Ontarians. For example, pharmacists will be allowed, under Bill 179, to prescribe certain drugs, to renew prescriptions—that would save people a visit to their doctors. This is the kind of change we envision for our health care system in the province.

We look forward to working with the college of pharmacists to implement the regulations that will make these changes a reality. These reforms are the right thing to do. We're committed to harnessing the enormous ability of pharmacists to benefit the people of Ontario.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is for the Premier. Ontario families are just 78 days away from July 1 and



the McGuinty Liberals greedy new HST tax grab being applied to everything.

In Brantford, Jim Todd says, "Being on ODSP, I'm barely able to make ends meet as it is. And now, I'll have to add as much as 13%."

The member for Brant won't stand up for Jim Todd, so I will. Premier, will you scrap your greedy HST tax grab so Ontario families, like Jim Todd's, can afford home heating fuel, gas and the items they need every day?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank the new member for the question. I'm delighted to answer your question.

I think it's important, particularly in your riding, that the good people of Leeds-Grenville know that the marginal effective tax rate on our side of the river is going to be half of what it is on the other side of the river, which is where we need the jobs: on this side of the river.

What we're doing is ensuring that the people with the least benefit the most by our tax reform. You referenced people on ODSP. They receive the GST rebate from the federal government. They'll continue to receive that, but now they'll receive the HST rebate, up to another \$260 for every adult and child in that family, whether in Leeds-Grenville or anywhere in the province of Ontario. That is something, unfortunately, your party voted against, but that is something that we are proud that we're doing.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** That's why it's important, despite the fact that your colleagues are a little caffeinated today, that we are making sure that we're reforming our tax—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's not only in Brant where they're looking for their provincial representative who stands up for their community.

In Sudbury, Leo Bisson is questioning how the McGuinty Liberals can say that the HST is good for everyone when it looks like the \$25 million in bonuses for tax collectors is only good for tax collectors. He says, "Look into the HST and you will see it's no good for Ontario. If the local MPP reads this, I hope he will do something for the first time in a long time."

The member for Sudbury won't ask, so I will: Will you scrap the greedy HST tax grab? Yes or no?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank Prime Minister Stephen Harper for the work that he has done in regard to reforming our taxes, working with our Premier. I want to thank the federal Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty, who is known better by some than others in this House, and particularly our Minister of Finance, Dwight Duncan.

Particularly, I want to thank your predecessor, Senator Robert Runciman, whose job it is to deliver the HST in the Senate of this great country. I would say that Senator Runciman is showing tremendous leadership in his new role of shepherding the HST legislation through Canada's Senate, and I know it's a job that he agreed to take on

when the Prime Minister gave him the privilege of serving in the Senate.

I say that we work together for the good of Ontario. You cannot have a strong Canada and a weak Ontario. That's why—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, last Friday, a number of projects were announced under the FIT program. Specifically, there were two particular projects: one in Hearst that's a biomass project that you would know about because we've met and we've discussed this particular project, as well as A&T Energy, who are putting forward a project on solar panel construction in the Val Rita area.

Can you tell me why two locally owned projects that are community based were bypassed in favour of an international project?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The Ontario Power Authority makes the decisions as to how these projects move forward, and they make them based on a large number of criteria. But I'm sure the member joins me in celebrating the fact that what we announced last week is going to create 20,000 jobs in every corner of this province. What we announced last week is the equivalent of a \$9-billion private sector investment in Ontario's economy: 184 new green projects that are going to deliver 2,500 megawatts of clean, green power to the people of Ontario. It was a good day for green energy in Ontario last week when the Premier and I made these announcements.

There's more to do and there will be more projects moving forward, but I think we're off to a pretty good start. We're leading the world.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, "a pretty good start" depends on where you stand. In the case of Hearst, you've got a locally owned project where they are going to basically clean up an area that has been polluted for a number of years. We've met on this issue before. It's locally owned, locally operated and locally sourced. In the case of Val Rita, all local ownership—again, sourced all within the province of Ontario.

Tell me what the downside is for the Ontario government to say that we're not going to favour those very projects that are community-based projects that come from Ontario in favour of projects that come from outside of this province.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member is right: I've had an opportunity to meet with the mayor and himself on this particular project, and I'll continue to work with them. I think there's a lot of potential there.

At the same time, the Ontario Power Authority, when they make these decisions, make them on a number of criteria, one of which is shovel-readiness. I'm not going to speak for them in terms of the criteria and their judg-



ment on this, but I think the project the member raises has potential, and we're going to continue to work with them.

There is potential for expansion of green energy right across this province. There are lots of good opportunities out there. All I can say is that 184 projects were moved forward last week, a \$9-billion investment when you include the mid-range projects we announced a month ago; 20,000 jobs—green jobs, new generation jobs—being produced across this province. That's something that every member of this Legislature should be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I have a question for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. In the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, in ridings across the north and, as a matter of fact, in ridings across the province, aboriginal communities face a number of unique challenges. Children and youth face particular challenges, including high levels of youth suicide and a high number of children in need of the protection of children's aid societies.

In fact, this week, the ministry posted a report on the review of the Child and Family Services Act. In the review of the provisions related to the protection of aboriginal children and youth, feedback from the aboriginal community told us that there is much to be done to better support those facing these challenges.

What is the ministry doing to address these concerns about strengthening support for Ontario's aboriginal youth?

1110

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for his question and his advocacy for his community and others on this important issue. I'm very pleased to speak to this issue. As the member said, we have come to the conclusion of the Child and Family Services Act review, and we continue to make progress with respect to ensuring a better future for aboriginal children and youth across the province.

Just this morning, I attended Native Child and Family Services of Toronto with my colleagues the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and the member for Toronto Centre, where we announced the appointment of Chief John Beaucage as the first advisor to the Minister of Children and Youth Services on aboriginal child welfare.

We know that there is much more work to do. We need the advice, the guidance and the facilitation of someone in the role of John Beaucage. We look forward to doing that work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I know all members welcome the appointment of Chief John Beaucage. I know that the province is making improvements for aboriginal children and youth; however, these challenges are not new challenges. Youth in northern remote communities, youth in downtown Toronto, youth in Algoma-Manitou-

lin and from across the province have been facing difficult circumstances for far too long. What is being done now to address additional supports for these youth?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** The member is quite correct. These issues are not new; they are issues that communities have been grappling with for a very long time. We know that the solutions are not simple and that we need a broad group of passionate people at the table. That is what Chief John Beaucage will do.

We can be proud of the work that we have done to date. I want to highlight a few of the key investments we have made in Ontario's aboriginal youth, both on- and off-reserve: \$8.5 million a year in Aboriginal Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, a program for aboriginal fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, in 180 communities, on- and off-reserve; \$6.2 million to provide mental health and life skill supports for at-risk urban aboriginal youth; and \$17 million a year in child care spaces for on- and off-reserve aboriginal children.

We have done a great deal, but there is much more to do. We look forward to working with experts, leaders, aboriginal leaders and those who can help us find the pathway for a better future for Ontario's aboriginal children and youth.

### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Premier. Last Friday, the Premier delivered an astonishing rebuke of Ontario's colleges and universities. The headline in the Globe and Mail says it all: "McGuinty Gives Ontario Colleges and Universities an F in New Spending." In a startling admission, the Premier said, "I don't have measurable improvement in my colleges and universities for the funding that I put in."

Why is the Premier chastising our colleges and universities for his mismanagement?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** In my next life, I want to come back as a headline writer because there's so much fun to be had in that regard. They are unbridled.

We have had the great privilege of working with our colleges and universities and those people who deliver our apprenticeship training, as well, and we've got some really good news for them. The first bit is that we're going to fund another 20,000 spaces in our colleges and universities this September. We're doing that notwithstanding the fact that we have some real financial challenges on our hands.

Beyond that, we want to sit down with the sector and develop a new five-year plan to ensure that we can move from 62% to 70% of Ontario adults having post-secondary education. We very much look forward to working with the sector in this regard.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I say to the Premier: I read the transcript, and I'd say the headline is bang-on.

When the Liberal government grossly underestimated enrolment growth, colleges and universities filled the void. When the government failed to deliver on the Pre-



mier's promise to bring post-secondary per-student funding up to the national average, colleges and universities made do and didn't complain. When this government implemented a sloppy Second Career program to deal with massive unemployment that created a quadruple cohort in the system, Ontario's colleges came to the government's rescue. This Premier has the audacity to call our colleges and universities failures and give them an F.

Will the Premier apologize to our colleges and universities?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to be very clear—and my honourable colleague knows this—there was never any reference to a grade of any kind, and I did not use the F-word, “failure,” in particular, just so we are clear on this count.

I do, again, sincerely, very much look forward to working with our colleges and universities. We've got this new ambition we're setting before ourselves of taking ourselves from 62% of our adults having a post-secondary education up to 70%.

We want to go ahead with a new online institute to enable more Ontarians to access a quality Ontario university degree online. We also want to invite more international students to come and acquire a first-class post-secondary education that can only be obtained here in Ontario, Canada.

#### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Labatt's decision to close Lakeport Brewery in Hamilton is another big blow to my city and the 143 families, of course, who counted on those good jobs to pay their bills. But there is a glimmer of hope: At least three interested parties are looking at taking over the operation. My question to the Premier, therefore, is a simple one: What is his government prepared to do to ensure that brewing operations and good jobs remain at the Lakeport site?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak not just to the member opposite but to the people of Hamilton.

Members on this side of the House, of course—the member for Hamilton Mountain in particular is very concerned about the goings-on with the potential loss of jobs out of that Labatt's facility.

I think we have to remember that if there is a role that the Ontario government can play to facilitate any discussion, any opportunities, with using that facility for others who could come in to make a viable business, the Ontario government will be there. We anticipate that we may well have that kind of role to play.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's true; Hamilton has been hit very hard by job losses. The 143 workers and their families are holding out hope, however, that jobs might be saved by a new operator at the Lakeport brewery. But Labatt's says it is moving all the equipment—lock, stock

and barrel—from the brewery, a move that industry experts say is going to make a takeover practically impossible. Given the Premier's close connections to key Labatt executives, including the vice-president of corporate affairs, will he get on the phone to his friends at Labatt's and make sure that the equipment is kept at the brewery?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I can't comment on who is friends with whom, but I can tell you that we are very concerned any time we have a job loss or the potential of families who won't have jobs. That is a huge concern to us. In southern Ontario, which has been the hardest-hit in the nation during the worst recession of our times in generations, we worry in particular about anything like this happening.

We are determined that if the Ontario government can play a role in facilitating discussion where there could be a takeover or that plant could become viable, we are prepared to do that role.

I can tell you that for Labatt's, they certainly are their own corporation with their decisions to make. If there's a way for us to be influential, we intend to play that role.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, today marks International Day of Pink, or Pink Shirt Day, which is observed every year in commemoration of a group of students at a high school in Nova Scotia who wore pink in support of a fellow student who was bullied for simply wearing a pink shirt.

I want to acknowledge the young people in our schools who are showing real leadership in creating respectful classrooms and playgrounds.

Mr. Speaker, as you will note, many members of the Legislature today are commemorating this by wearing an article of pink clothing. I think many are wearing boxer shorts.

Minister, can you outline what our government is doing to prevent acts of bullying in our schools?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Bullying in schools has been a very serious issue, and that is why our government did take action. That is why we amended the Education Act to include bullying as an infraction for which a student can be disciplined.

Our safe schools strategy will help protect students and ensure that there are serious consequences for those who would be involved in bullying activities.

The Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act came into effect February 1, and it does require all board employees—if they witness an act of bullying, that must be reported to the principal. Principals and staff have been trained to understand this.

I would also want to thank the member for Kitchener-Waterloo, who has recognized the value of our safe school action teams in her resolution that requires these teams to recognize and organize Bullying Awareness Week in November. All members of this House—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?



1120

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** Minister, I think the expression of support for this initiative is a great idea. I'm glad that so many members of all parties are showing their support for ending discrimination and for safer school environments.

Minister, Pink Shirt Day also represents a desire to end discriminatory behaviour and to ensure that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, feel included and are free of discrimination. Acts of discrimination and bullying based on these factors—and any other, for that matter—are entirely unacceptable. Homophobia, racism and other forms of discrimination do not belong in our schools at any time.

Would the minister tell us what her ministry is doing to ensure that students of all backgrounds are treated equally and feel included in their schools?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I know that parents in my riding have spoken to me on this very issue as well, and I'm happy to report in the Legislature today that in April 2009, we released *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*. It does aim to have inclusiveness as part of the understanding in our schools. This strategy provides a framework to help the education community identify and remove discriminatory biases in their classrooms and in their schools.

We started our work on the equity strategy; when we started, only 43 of 72 boards had a plan in place. However, by September of this year all boards in the province of Ontario will have plans in place. I think that this is very important and I know it's something that parents would expect, and we can say in September of this year—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** My question is to the Attorney General. In 2007, Dalton McGuinty promised to create a disability rights secretariat. It is now 2010, and despite the legal requirement to do so, this secretariat does not exist. Ontarians with disabilities want to know: Why did you break yet another promise?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** To the minister responsible for disability issues.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** This is a very good question; however, I'm very proud of what the Ontario government has done with regard to accessibility. As you know, we passed a bill in 2005 with the unanimity of this House for us to make sure that by 2025, Ontario will be fully accessible. We have been working so hard for the past two years to develop standards in accessibility, and we're very proud to say that the accessibility standards are almost all completed—some of them need approval from cabinet—and will be in place, and Ontario will be a leader in Canada and in North America.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** There's still no secretariat. Many people with a disability face barriers when trying to exercise a constitutionally protected right to vote in elections. Members of the disability community say that your Bill 231 will not address a number of these obstacles. The Premier says he is open to new technologies to assist disabled voters, but your legislation forbids these technologies and goes so far as creating barriers to the use of cost-effective voting equipment used in England and the United States. The disability community demands action. This afternoon, we will consider motions to amend Bill 231.

Will the McGuinty Liberals account for their promise to improve accessibility in our democratic processes and allow these new technologies to be used?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Bill 231 is proposing the most substantial improvement to Ontario's Election Act in the history of this province: to enhance accessibility in provincial elections. The reforms introduced in Bill 231 would significantly improve access to voting, particularly for persons with disabilities, while protecting election integrity. This is part of our government's ongoing commitment to improve the lives and participation of persons with disabilities in Ontario.

I am very proud to say that this bill, if passed, will make Ontario the first among the federal and provincial governments in Canada to allow the Chief Electoral Officer to provide accessible voting machines in every returning office for advanced polls so that voters with disabilities can vote privately and independently—very proud.

#### RETIREMENT HOMES

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the minister responsible for seniors' issues. This morning, I spoke about Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes. I raised several questions, particularly about mandatory sprinkler systems in every retirement home in Ontario. Government members know that three—I repeat, three—coroner's inquests have recommended mandatory sprinkler systems. Despite knowing of these well-investigated recommendations, the McGuinty Liberals have ignored this expertise and have taken no steps toward implementing these life-saving recommendations.

Can the minister explain why life-saving sprinkler systems in all retirement homes are not mandatory in Ontario?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I'll take the first part. I may refer this to the minister responsible for the fire code.

Let me just say to the member that I share his interest in safety very much, and I think everybody here in the Legislature does.

I'd just say to the public: Recognize that for the first time in the history of the province we are moving to regulate, license and inspect retirement homes. That has never been done before. We will set safety standards and care standards—particularly safety standards. It's the first time ever for retirement homes that there will be stan-



dards set, and we will inspect, we will license, and we will ensure that they're carried out.

The advice I get—and I think the bill anticipates this—is that this will be a very substantial increase in safety in retirement homes. We take the advice very much of the fire marshal and the fire code. We intend that during our inspections—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The results of the three coroner's inquests speak volumes about the absolute need for mandatory sprinkler systems in all Ontario retirement homes. The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs has fully supported these recommendations of the coroners' inquests. Thirty-six residents died in the 1980, 1995 and 1997 retirement home fires, which resulted in the coroners' recommendations of retroactive mandatory sprinkler systems.

Can the minister explain, in the circumstances of those three specific retirement home fires, what tools other than the automatic sprinklers would have saved those 36 seniors' lives?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** Again, I go back to the advice we get in terms of safety in retirement homes. Part of the bill anticipates the fire code being strictly enforced, all staff trained in fire prevention, regular inspections of the fire extinguishers in the building, regular training of the staff, posting of the emergency procedures, licensing of the homes to make sure they are following carefully the advice of the fire marshal.

I would say to the public that safety very much is anticipated as an integral part of the first-time-ever licensing and regulating of retirement homes. I believe we are making a dramatic step forward in retirement home safety, and very much following, I might say, the advice of the fire marshal as well.

## VOLUNTEERS

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Minister, our province has a long and rich tradition of volunteerism. Each year, millions of Ontarians benefit from the contributions of almost five million volunteers helping 45,000 non-profit organizations.

As all members in this House know, one of the distinct pleasures of being an MPP is that we have the privilege to meet, interact with and support volunteers and the organizations that assist almost every day in the course of our duties. These are generous, passionate and dedicated individuals. These are good citizens. In particular, many young people in my riding of Ottawa Centre volunteer their time and their youthful energy to build a stronger and better community.

With National Volunteer Week coming up next week, can the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration tell us how we as legislators and public figures can encourage more youth to volunteer in our communities?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Volunteerism is citizenship in action and makes a positive difference in the lives of millions of Ontarians.

This government is proudly sponsoring the third annual ChangeTheWorld Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge, working with the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network. This initiative will encourage more than 10,000 youth right across the province to volunteer for the next three weeks, from April 18 to May 8.

1130

To support the ChangeTheWorld challenge, I'm announcing today the first annual MPP volunteer challenge, which calls on all MPPs to volunteer their time in the coming three weeks in their communities and across Ontario. If every member of this House participates in the MPP volunteer challenge, we can inspire our youth to volunteer and get involved in their communities.

My office will be sending all members more information on this exciting opportunity shortly. I strongly encourage all of you to take the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm very excited to hear about the MPP volunteer challenge. I can tell my colleagues on both sides of the House that they're going to have some stiff competition from the member from Ottawa Centre.

But in all seriousness, as elected representatives of Ontario, we have a special ability to encourage more of our youth to volunteer in their communities. Clearly, this can begin by setting an example for our young people to follow. There are thousands of charitable and not-for-profit organizations which need volunteers to support the good work they do each and every day, but getting out there and setting a good example as legislators is just one gesture to our volunteers that we support them.

Minister, please tell Ontarians what action our government is undertaking to support volunteers and the volunteer organizations that are working so hard to make our communities better across Ontario?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I trust that in this answer—and I'm going to use this as an opportunity to again remind members. This sounded very much like a ministerial statement. You made an announcement of a new initiative in the form of a question and answer in question period, which, in my opinion, would have been much more appropriate to have been made during routine proceedings or under ministerial statements.

Please proceed with the answer, but I do caution and remind all members that this is question period, which is to deal with urgent public business, and to not be making announcements.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The McGuinty government believes that the voluntary sector is a strong partner to all of us and one that shares the goal of building more vibrant and prosperous communities. The work of our volunteers and non-profits has been critical to Ontario's success, particularly in this difficult time, and has helped our province confront and overcome the global economic downturn. To further their support, my ministry invests in non-profits to explore such issues



as social enterprise and other new ideas that can ensure their sustainability.

Related to our volunteers, I was pleased to attend last night in Richmond Hill one of the 47 ceremonies in every corner of Ontario honouring our volunteers through the volunteer service awards. Our volunteers helped build this province and, in return, we support our volunteers.

### PHARMACISTS

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Sam Patel owns the independent Keswick Pharmacy in my riding. He delivers to seniors, holds clinics and makes up orders for nursing homes. Now, with your cuts to front-line medical care, he will have to cancel each of these special services.

Sam is not alone. Pharmacies across rural Ontario are in the same boat and many will be forced to close, depriving thousands of needed medical care and advice in their communities.

Why are you trying to cut access to the front-line care that pharmacists like Sam offer to my constituents?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome the opportunity to talk about this. The first thing I want to say is that this is all about improving access to drugs for the people of Ontario at a fair and lower price. We are committed to supporting access in rural areas. We have put \$24 million into our plan that we will invest in pharmacies that provide that vital access to pharmacy services in their communities.

The other thing I want to make very clear is that we are committed to paying pharmacists directly for services they provide to customers. We want to pay pharmacies for providing those vital services to pharmacists. That is also part of our plan.

I would urge you to speak to your constituent and urge that pharmacist to embrace the new way of doing pharmacy services in this province by enhancing the services they provide, and we will—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** On Monday, you told this House that we had to make a choice between pharmacies and patients. This is a false choice. Pharmacists like Sam Patel are front-line health care providers. They keep my constituents healthy and out of the hospital. You are more interested in spending health care money on your eHealth boondoggle and consultants and salaries at the LHINs instead of local health care. Then, when you are questioned, you attack pharmacies.

Will you explain to Sam Patel why he should have to cut services and possibly go out of business?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, we want him to provide more services. We also want to, on behalf of the people of Ontario, get fair lower prices.

Let me give you another example. There's a drug called pantoprazole that's used for acid reflux and peptic ulcers. Currently, a person would pay around \$536 for that drug. Under our proposed changes, the person would

pay \$178 for that drug. That would be a savings for that person of \$358.

We are paying too much for drugs in this province. I would put the question to pharmacists: Please explain why Ontarians are paying so much more than people in the United States, in France and in the United Kingdom. It's a remarkable inflated price we're paying. We're on the side—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The member from Welland on a point of order.

### USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you, Speaker.

I'm referring specifically to standing orders 37 and 35 in making reference to the question posed by the member for Ottawa Centre earlier today. I appreciate that the Speaker has commented on it, but please, Speaker: 37, as everyone knows, requires that the Speaker disallow—it's not permissive; it's required. The Speaker "shall disallow any question which he or she does not consider urgent or of public importance." This is because question period, one of the most important parts of a legislative day, has as its focus maintaining the principle of responsible government, holding the government accountable.

It is obvious and it is a notorious fact that backbench government questions tend to be scripted questions. That is to say that there's a collaboration between the ministry, the minister of which is answering the question, and the person posing the question. We do not reject the proposition of backbench questions. We think they can be very important and very useful. I think over the course of my time here I've seen that put into effect. But there is standing order 37, where the Speaker "shall" disallow a question that is not urgent or of public importance.

Standing order 35 is "Ministerial statements," and that, of course, provides for a period of time where a minister can make ministerial statements as part of the routine proceedings.

I note in John Stewart, *The Canadian House of Commons: Procedure and Reform*, page 59, "Statements by ministers with regard to government policy, followed by comments by opposition spokesmen, are far from new." It goes on: "Out of fairness opposition spokesmen were allowed to comment on the statement."

Our standing orders, of course, contain that very provision. If there's going to be a ministerial statement, then there has to be an opportunity for the maximum five-minute response. With respect, ministers should not be allowed to circumvent that right of the opposition members by effectively sneaking a ministerial statement into a—dare I say it?—scripted and collaborative question and response by the minister.

You can't, of course, deal with this in terms of it being retroactive, but I'm asking you to be—and I appreciate your comments earlier. But to be very, very clear, I'm asking that this Chair find those questions out of order should they occur in the future—regardless of their source, I might add.



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The government House leader.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I would simply say that we in the government feel that recognizing volunteers and volunteer month is of public importance, great public importance, and that the question that was raised was about volunteers and how we recognize them. We are in the process of recognizing them across the province this month, and I think it was a valid question of public importance.

1140

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Whitby—Oshawa.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The points with respect to rules 35 and 37 have been made very ably by the member from Welland, and I can't add anything more, other than to say that we concur with the points that he has made.

Though I certainly do appreciate the admonition that you offered earlier, we would respectfully ask that, in the future, you may consider being very firm in your rulings with respect to these matters and making sure that the rules are being followed, as we well expect them to be.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I want to thank the honourable member from Welland, the government House leader and the member from Whitby—Oshawa for their comments.

I have been reminded many times of standing order 37 from a number of members in the chamber. I have taken the liberty to review a number of questions that have been asked by members of the backbench as different parties have enjoyed the privilege of sitting to the right of the Speaker. I can assure you that in my review of those questions, for many of the concerns that the honourable members may raise about questions that are being asked today, one could say that those concerns could have been raised when the Conservatives sat over here and when the NDP sat over here.

But the Speaker is sitting here now and the Speaker has to deal with it as the Speaker sits here. I am conscious of standing order 37. As the members are aware, it's not for the Speaker to determine whether or not a question fits into that sphere of public importance. Where I do agree with the honourable member—and that's why I interjected and made those comments. That was clearly an announcement that was being made in here, and an announcement was being made that information was going to be coming to members.

I will endeavour to do my part to be cognizant of and alert to the requirements, and I would remind the members to try and do their part. I do listen closely to the government questions. Many of them are very good and are of urgent public importance. I'll cite the member from Toronto Centre today. I think the question that he asked of the Minister of Education was of importance to all members of this House.

As I've said before, remember that one man's pothole is another man's crater. I'll ask all members to be cognizant.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to correct the record from my question. Instead of a 20% cut to special assistance rates, which I said, I meant to say, "up to a 20% effective cut to social assistance rates."

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** As the honourable member just corrected his record, the Speaker needs to correct his record again today that it is for the Speaker to determine whether or not a question fits into the sphere of public importance. Be conscious of that.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I want to just take this opportunity to welcome some students who will be visiting the Legislature today from Bowmanville High School, and their teachers David Rempel and Al Velsa, visiting from Durham. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Also, I think it's important to acknowledge the brother of the honourable member from Cambridge who is here today: Mr. Robert Martiniuk; his wife, Lynda; and also his sister Rosemary. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to add to my answer given to the member from Beaches—East York. One of the reasons, also, for the extension is to give us more time to develop the new program—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I can't allow that. You can stand up to correct your record.

**Interjection:** That was a good try.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** But, yes—thanks, to the honourable member—that was a good try.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### 2010 ONTARIO BUDGET

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have a deferred vote on the amendment by Mr. Hudak to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. Members please take their seats.

All those in favour of the amendment will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Arnott, Ted  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Hillier, Randy  
MacLeod, Lisa

Martiniuk, Gerry  
Miller, Norm  
Munro, Julia  
O'Toole, John  
Quellette, Jerry J.  
Savoline, Joyce

Shurman, Peter  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those opposed?

#### Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Best, Margaret  
Bisson, Gilles  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Brown, Michael A.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Crozier, Bruce  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Fonseca, Peter

Gerretsen, John  
Gélinas, France  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hampton, Howard  
Horwath, Andrea  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Kormos, Peter  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Marchese, Rosario  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Paul

Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Oraziotti, David  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Prue, Michael  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Sorbara, Greg  
Sousa, Charles  
Tabuns, Peter  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Bisson, Gilles  
Chudleigh, Ted  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Gélinas, France  
Hampton, Howard  
Hillier, Randy

Horwath, Andrea  
Kormos, Peter  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Marchese, Rosario  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Miller, Norm  
Miller, Paul  
Munro, Julia  
O'Toole, John

Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Prue, Michael  
Savoline, Joyce  
Shurman, Peter  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Tabuns, Peter  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 26.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1202 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SOCIAL WORK AWARD

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I am pleased to stand today to congratulate MPP Elizabeth Witmer as the 2010 recipient of the Social Work Doctors' Colloquium fifth annual social work Political Award of Merit. Mrs. Witmer is being honoured for her long-standing advocacy on behalf of the profession in Ontario. Each year, the colloquium, with support from the Ontario Association of Social Workers, selects an elected official who in their personal and professional lives has exemplified the qualities that help to improve the well-being of the citizens of Ontario. To quote Dr. Dan Andreae, co-chair of the colloquium, "We believe it is important to publicly recognize elected officials who make significant personal and professional sacrifices to enhance opportunities for Ontarians to lead more productive lives."

Today also provides an opportunity to thank the social workers in Ontario. Human rights and social justice are the philosophical underpinnings of social work practice, and I applaud you for the work that you do in resolving the problems that affect the day-to-day lives of individuals. On behalf of my colleagues, I say thank you to our social workers and congratulations to Mrs. Witmer.

### CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** This Monday and Tuesday, a delegation from the Catholic Women's League came to Queen's Park. Canada's Catholic Women's League is a grassroots organization with nearly 55,000 members throughout Ontario. These women come from virtually every community and nearly every background and circumstance. Despite these differences, they are bound together by faith, fellowship and service.

The executive members of the league's Ontario provincial council have met with government on an

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 16; the nays are 75.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the amendment lost.

On March 25, Mr. Duncan moved, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1154 to 1159.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Best, Margaret  
Bisson, Gilles  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Brown, Michael A.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Crozier, Bruce  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight

Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol

Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Oraziotti, David  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Sorbara, Greg  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?



almost annual basis. This year, they came to share their concerns, to propose solutions and to congratulate the government for some of the measures it has taken.

This year, the delegation included the president, Shari Guinta; the president-elect, Marlene Pavletic, who is from Thunder Bay; the past president, Margaret Ann Jacobs; and the chair of the legislation standing committee, Anne Madden. I particularly want to congratulate Pauline Krupa, chair of the resolutions standing committee, who is also from Thunder Bay and an east-ender at heart. Pauline did a great job working with my office to organize this delegation to Queen's Park, and I want to thank her for that.

I also want to thank the Premier, Ministers Bentley, Broten, Dombrowsky, Gravelle and Phillips, as well as Minister Matthews' office, for taking the time to meet with this extraordinary group of women. This delegation was charming, impressive and purposeful, and they brought forward thoughtful proposals. I look forward to hearing more from them and working with them in the future.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I rise today to inform the Legislature about the tale of two hospitals. Both the Toronto Grace Health Centre and the Shelburne site of the Headwaters Health Care Centre provide care for complex continuing care and palliative care patients. But that is where the similarity ends.

As we all know, on the eve of the Toronto Centre by-election, the minister found \$15 million to save the Toronto Grace Health Centre. No last-minute reprieve was available for Headwaters, and so the complex continuing care beds are being transferred out of the Shelburne community.

In response to this transfer, which will reduce the number of acute care beds in our community, the Central West LHIN has initiated the Shelburne community health task force, to determine the health needs of the community, including the feasibility of the Shelburne health centre. Both the mayor of Shelburne and I are currently members of the task force.

Interestingly, when Shelburne mayor Ed Crewson attended the recent Ontario Good Roads Association convention in Toronto, he had an opportunity to ask the minister publicly if she would commit to providing funding to implement the recommendations of the Shelburne community health task force. Unfortunately for Shelburne, the minister has been unwilling to commit to writing a cheque, as she has done for the Toronto Grace. Instead, to the mayor's great disappointment, he received "health bafflegab" for an answer.

In Ontario, we pride ourselves in having a health care system that is accessible to everyone. I would ask the minister to remember that the residents in north Dufferin deserve as much of our attention and financial commitment as the residents of Toronto Centre.

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** On February 10, 2010, I had the pleasure of hosting our first Celebration 2010 event in my riding of Peterborough. The theme for this event was to honour the unsung heroes of sports. We wanted to recognize and thank those community members who work behind the scenes to promote sports in our area. Nominees included coaches, assistant coaches, Zamboni drivers, fundraising committee members, those who work at the arenas and the ball and soccer fields, and many more. It was a tribute, by those of us who participate in sports or who have children who belong to teams, to show our appreciation for the time these volunteers spend in providing athletes with the best experience sports have to offer.

I struck a committee of community members that included sports announcers, past athletes and leaders in our community. The toughest part was to choose, from the many nominations we received, the 50 most deserving of the Celebration 2010 award. The event was attended by over 300 people. It was a great success. More importantly, it demonstrates this community's recognition of how valuable and appreciated these volunteers are. It was a public thank you to all those who had given their time and talents in every sport that what they do has not gone unnoticed and unappreciated.

Our special guest that night was our colleague, the Honourable Peter Fonseca. He attended not in his capacity as minister, but in his capacity as an Olympic athlete. His message to those attending that evening was one of gratitude and thanks, because he experienced firsthand the vital role that volunteers played in his life and in the lives of all our athletes at all levels.

### SIKH COMMUNITY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Earlier this month, Christians and those of the Jewish faith observed celebrations of renewal through Easter and Passover. Today, more than 30 million Sikhs in 161 countries around the world observe a celebration of renewal known as Vaisakhi.

In 1699, the 10th guru, Gobind Singh, created the Khalsa, the Sikh brotherhood. Through this brotherhood, the Sikh faith became unified. It did away with the caste system and created a code of conduct and discipline for members of the Sikh faith. The code is based on equality, justice, peace, courage, honesty, community service and the universality of the brotherhood, along with a visible identity and the five Kakars.

But Vaisakhi is not only a religious celebration of renewal and rebirth; it also marks the beginning of the Sikh New Year and the start of the harvest season.

In the Greater Toronto Area alone, there are more than 100,000 Sikhs who celebrate Vaisakhi. The festival is celebrated through music, dance, parades and the bringing of flowers and offerings to the gurdwaras and temples.

Celebrations of different cultures and faiths are part of the diversity that makes Ontario unique. On behalf of our



leader, Tim Hudak, and the Ontario PC caucus, I want to extend warm wishes and a wonderful, safe, happy and memorable Vaisakhi and Khalsa day.

1510

#### MAUREEN LINDSAY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Yesterday friends, relatives and neighbours said goodbye to one of the true heroes of Beaches—East York, Maureen Lindsay.

Maureen Lindsay lived in East York for a long time and was adored by all of us who knew her. She was involved in literally everything: She ran the mayor's Christmas dinner for all those years while and after I was mayor. She was part of Team East York, which fought the amalgamation that forced us into Toronto. She was on the executive of Dentonia Park. She, even as an older woman, went out and flooded the ice rinks on the coldest days of the winter. She was part of the Beaches Easter Parade, fundraising for Providence Villa, and she took on politicians. That's probably what she did the best. When she came to Toronto city hall or to East York, you certainly knew she was there. She was a woman who knew how to get things done.

Unfortunately and sadly, she died two weeks ago in a tragic house fire. Our community mourns her loss. We remember everything that she did that was good: all of her good works and her commitment. We miss her enormously. We are saddened by her loss, but with the knowledge that she did so much good during her all-too-short life.

#### PENSION PLANS

**Mr. Bob Chiarelli:** There is justifiable outrage over the plight of Nortel pensioners, 800 of whom reside in my riding. I have been calling on our government and the government of Canada to help Nortel pensioners and also to take action to prevent this calamity from ever happening again. Although Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada with a pension benefits guarantee fund, unfortunately successive governments have underfunded it. So I am pleased that, as a first step, our recent budget invested half a billion dollars into the fund to assist Nortel and other pensioners.

I ask our government to continue to work with Nortel pensioners to find a way to ensure that their fund is not wound up. This is their priority request of our government. I also ask our government and the Premier to continue to call on the federal government for a national action plan on pensions. As requested by Nortel pensioners, the federal government must do the right thing and amend the federal bankruptcy laws to give Nortel pensioners and future pensioners a preference. Time is short, so the time for action is now.

#### DISASTER RELIEF

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** As you know, on January 12 Haiti was struck by a devastating earthquake. It caused

incredible damage to property and catastrophic loss of life. Many nations, organizations and individuals from around the world responded quickly with generosity and compassion. I would like to recognize one such person and his team in particular.

Dr. Frank Lista, a surgeon and founder of The Plastic Surgery Clinic in Mississauga South, volunteered for a humanitarian mission to Haiti. Under an umbrella organization called the Life Enhancement Association for People, Dr. Lista and a team of five others travelled to Haiti on February 13, 2010. Once in Haiti, they provided on-the-ground medical assistance to victims of the disaster, most of whom were abandoned or orphaned children. Short on sleep and working in makeshift hospitals, they had performed 32 surgical procedures by the time they left Haiti.

Dr. Lista and his team raised funds, took time away from their jobs and families, and worked selflessly to help people they had never met in a country far from home. The actions of Dr. Lista and his team are truly inspirational. I commend Dr. Lista and all of those who are supporting the ongoing efforts to provide aid to the people of Haiti.

There remains much work to be done. The devastation suffered by the people of Haiti presents a long and challenging road to recovery. Thousands upon thousands are still in need of assistance. Our support must be unwavering as the people of Haiti fight to recover from this catastrophe.

Please join me in thanking Dr. Frank Lista, Dr. Zbigniew Wojtasik, nurse Lori Robinson, nurse Sue Duncan, nurse Tammy Mitchell and Leslie Gillanders.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** It is my pleasure to update this House on the series of public information sessions I am hosting throughout my riding on the new tax reform. The goal of these sessions is to answer questions regarding the harmonized sales tax. To date, I have hosted 13 information sessions, and I have nine more to go.

Last week, at our session in Vankleek Hill, there were 85 people in attendance, including farmers, members of the business community, senior citizens and members of the construction sector. I have had very positive feedback from my constituents. People told me, "We finally have the truth."

What is obvious is the amount of misinformation out there. People were surprised to find out that right now, the PST gets embedded into the cost of doing business, and these added costs get passed on to the consumers. The HST will change that.

I am thrilled to be engaging in discussions with my constituents about the new tax reform, an initiative that is all about creating jobs and creating an environment where businesses can compete in the global marketplace.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Will you permit me to introduce three visitors who just

arrived in the House? Would that be all right with everyone?

**Interjections:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** They agree. Who am I not to?

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please welcome to the Legislative Assembly Vic Cauchi, founder and president of Vengeo; Jennifer Kim of Vengeo as well; and a high school and junior high colleague of mine, Mark Healy. He's president of Canadian Tire as well as the chief creative officer for Vengeo. Welcome.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you and welcome.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### MINING AMENDMENT ACT (RESOURCES PROCESSED IN ONTARIO), 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MINES (RESSOURCES TRANSFORMÉES EN ONTARIO)

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to amend the Mining Act to require resources to be processed in Ontario / Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines afin d'exiger que les ressources soient transformées en Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Does the member wish to give a short statement?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The bill amends the Mining Act, which currently provides that all ores or minerals raised or removed from lands, claims or mining rights that are patented, leased or otherwise disposed of must be treated and refined in Canada. The amendment to subsection 91(1) of the act changes that by providing that all such ores and minerals must be treated and refined in Ontario.

## PETITIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history, but he still cuts health care services and nurses; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again on Canada Day 2010 with his new 13% combined

GST, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee, newspapers and magazines, gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice and soccer field rentals, Internet fees, theatre admissions, funerals, courier fees, fast food sold for \$4, bus fares, golf green fees, gym fees, snowplowing, bicycles, taxi fares, train fares, domestic air travel, accountant services, and real estate commissions;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

Pursuant to the standing orders, I affix my name thereto.

1520

## ARTIFICIAL TANNING EQUIPMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yesterday, I introduced a bill about skin cancer prevention. I'm very happy that the Ontario Medical Student Association is circulating those postcards. They ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"To enact legislation which bans the use of artificial tanning equipment by youths under the age of 18; prohibit the marketing of artificial tanning targeting youth; develop and maintain a registry of artificial tanning equipment in Ontario; ensure all staff operating artificial tanning equipment are trained on operation procedures, maintenance and how to identify people at greater risk of developing cancer, particularly those with fair skin; and require that signage be placed in clear view of each bed, clearly outlining the health risks of artificial tanning."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with page Carrington.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas we currently have no psychiatric emergency service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to support the creation of a psychiatric emergency service in emergency at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario."

I support this petition, and I will affix my signature to it.

## ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a number of petitions from my riding of Durham, which read as follows:



"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1 billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"Reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"Increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"Increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"Reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to Tudor, one of the new pages here.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients ... ; and

"Whereas since October 2009, insured PET scans have been performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Zachery to carry it to the table.

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas violent crime and gangs have been a problem in our communities; children require safe schools and safe streets in order to thrive;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue with their support of the guns and gangs program;

"To continue to recognize the importance of a strong and educated police force;

"To continue to support rehabilitation programs;

"To continue to keep education as a top priority; and

"To continue to make our streets and schools" a safer place to be.

I gladly sign this petition and send it with Khaleel.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario provided to me by the Cambridge Christian School of Cambridge.

"Whereas Cambridge Memorial Hospital and other hospitals in Waterloo region are experiencing substantial increased demands due to population growth; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government's freeze on new long-term-care facilities has resulted in additional long-term-care patients in our hospitals; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government's cuts to hospital funding have resulted in a dangerous environment for patients and staff in Cambridge and across Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) That the McGuinty government meet its obligations to introduce a population-needs-based funding formula for hospitals, as has been done in other Canadian provinces."

Pursuant to the standing orders, I affix my name thereto.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a unique opportunity to develop the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario and the Legislative Assembly [should] ensure that this valuable resource is used to advantage all Ontarians while respecting the environment and rights of the First Nations people;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To develop the natural resources in the Ring of Fire for economic benefit for Ontario;

"To ensure that the development of the Ring of Fire does so only within the guidelines of an EPA report;

"To respect the rights of the First Nations people and communities; and

"To work with local industry to bring employment to northern Ontario communities."

I will sign this petition and present it to page Kate.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've got thousands of petitions here I want to get on the record from my riding of Durham. They read as follows:

"Whereas Premier ... McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy" and use "every day." Just a few examples are: "coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming"; personal care; "home renovations and home services"; rent; "veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes and" last and certainly not least, "funeral arrangements;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes" in 2003, if you'll recall, in that election. "However, in 2004, he brought in the" dreaded "health tax, which" now "costs upwards ... to \$900 per individual. And now" he's set to raise your taxes again.

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on ... hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to Tudor, my personal page here today. You've been here twice.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a" distinct "disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

"Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

"Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

"Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single" sales "tax system; and

"Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

"Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers."

Since I agree with this petition, I'll sign it and send it along with page Ara.

1530

#### TAXATION

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples include: coffee...; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual" ever year. "And now he is raising our taxes yet again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I agree with this petition, I will affix my name to it and give it to page Khaleel.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we never want to see another tragedy like Walkerton ever again. The health and safety of Ontarians can never come second to profit and greed. Clean, safe drinking water is a right all Ontarians should be able to enjoy.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;

"To continue to monitor and test our water systems;

"To continue to strengthen Ontario's trust in the safety of our drinking water;

"To continue to invest in new systems and personnel to monitor and test our water;

"To never forget the mistakes of the past and always hold our water supply to the highest standard;

"To continue to invest in the health and safety of Ontarians through our water supply."

I, too, will sign the petition.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** In the remaining time I have left, I'll read one more of the thousands of petitions that we receive in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:



“Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

“Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty’s new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy” and use “every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming;” personal care; personal fitness; “home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election. However”—we all remember—“in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs upwards ... to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes yet again;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario’s current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.” Especially the pharmacists.

I’m pleased to present this to Kyle, one of the pages here at Queen’s Park.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 POSANT LES FONDATIONS DE L’EMPLOI ET DE LA CROISSANCE

Mr. Phillips, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts / *Projet de loi 16, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2010 et édictant ou modifiant diverses lois.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be sharing the vast majority of my time with the member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I’d love to invite my esteemed colleague the member from Scarborough–Agincourt back to his feet. Those who know him well know that he served in this place both in government, more than once, and also in opposition. I know that the then government of the day, a couple of members of which are here, always appreciated the role that the member played when he was a finance critic and held the government’s feet to the fire for a considerable period of time, and, I must suggest, with a tremendous degree of success.

But I’m very pleased to be able to follow him this afternoon and provide some time and some remarks in respect of Bill 16, the province’s 2010-11 budget bill, *Creating the Foundation for Jobs and Growth Act, 2010.*

It seems like a really good opportunity, given the fact that I had the opportunity to sit and hear some of the petitions that were recently read, particularly from the members opposite. I see the member from Durham is still here for the afternoon. He did have the opportunity to present petitions more than once this afternoon in respect to matters regarding the government’s plan for future tax reform. We might not necessarily agree in regards to the government’s tax reform. I support it; he doesn’t appear to—at least from the reading of the petitions he doesn’t appear to, but I’m not sure if that’s his personal position or simply the position from the petitions that he was reading.

This afternoon, in the time available, I wanted to speak more directly to our 2010-11 budget on behalf of the Honourable Dwight Duncan, the Minister of Finance, in respect of Bill 16. We all know the past year, and more than a year now, has been a challenging one economically and to do with policy structures in the province of Ontario and elsewhere, trying to respond to an ever-changing climate on almost a daily basis, certainly a very frequent basis, as we tried to steer through some waters that were and continue to be somewhat uncharted.

The global recession has been affecting most jurisdictions, if not all jurisdictions, in the world, and Ontario is certainly among those. Many countries and jurisdictions have been facing sharp declines in revenue and increasing expenses, as people would obviously turn to government for support. Ontario was not immune either to the needs of our constituents for government support or to the precipitous decline in corporate revenues in particular that we have been experiencing in the recent past.

In Ontario, though, we’re clear about what we have to do during these times. What we need to do is everything possible to create jobs and create the climate for job creation to help families in this province at a time when that is most needed, and to establish the foundations for future economic growth. On March 25, just a few weeks back, when Minister Duncan rose to deliver the budget speech, it was our seventh provincial budget, and, for the most part, one that’s going to lead us out of this recession into a much better fiscal place.

The budget has plans to take immediate action to make this province more competitive both now and certainly as we move forward in the longer term. Budgets are not just a point-in-time document; budgets are about the planning and strategy to ensure economic health and economic growth in the future.

We’re working hard to bring back to our economy the strength that we want to see while continuing to move to firm fiscal footing. Our 2010 budget details the steps that we’re planning to take to respond to the present challenges and lay out a clear plan to cut the deficit that we are now faced with in half in five years, and eliminate it



entirely by the 2017-18 time frame. For some, that seems to be an extended period of time, but we all know the depth of this recession and what that has meant to our economic condition. I will make comments as I go through in respect to the fiscal depth of the deficit that we currently face. So it's setting out a prudent plan, a plan that's not only achievable but, if things go well, one in which we will exceed our grasp in that regard.

1540

Since the McGuinty government took office some six years ago, we have remained firm in our commitment to a couple of things, but most importantly to improve public services that Ontarians have come to expect. We inherited, I would suggest, not only a fiscal deficit but, more importantly, a deficit in public services. It took a considerable number of years to create that particular hole in public services. Even when the fiscal capacity was there to support and grow public services, the former government chose a very different direction. We've spent the past six years rebuilding those public services, investing in them, in our health and in our education. We're making investments as well in infrastructure, specific investments in infrastructure as a stimulus for our economy to preserve and create jobs throughout this province.

We are also making investments in skills training, particularly to help unemployed workers as they prepare for new careers. I think it is common now to speak of a recovery that is unlike other recoveries we've seen. We're not necessarily going back to the same economy. We all think, and we all know, it's going to look different in some fashion, to some extent, more or less, depending on what sector of the economy you're looking at. So there's a particular need and a particular demand on those who find themselves unemployed to be able to retrain, not only to enhance the employment skills they may have had, if they're going back to that type of employment, to ensure they can do it in a more effective, efficient and productive fashion, but to give them opportunities to train for careers they might not have envisioned themselves being in at the beginning of this recessionary period. Within our communities, we need to keep Ontarians working, and particularly to help those who are vulnerable in our communities, as we have been doing and will continue to do.

These are the measures needed to establish the conditions for future economic growth. It's not simply a matter of tax reform, but there are some fundamental needs to ensure future economic growth. We do that as we work to lessen the impact of this particular recession. In providing that climate for economic growth, I mentioned skills training for those who have been in the workforce, and I mentioned the need for those quality public services, whether it's health services we need on a daily basis, on occasion, whether it's hospital services for our friends in the community who are sick or whether it's education attainment. I'll speak more about the educational opportunities this budget is going to create as well.

All these things are measures, as I say, to establish conditions for economic growth. This plan is working,

because we are seeing signs that the economy is recovering and is turning around. It's not just in Ontario; we are seeing signs in other jurisdictions where the economy is beginning to look better. As I drove in this morning, I listened on the radio to the economic indicators that were coming through. There are two major indicators coming out of the US today as to inflation and the retail sales sector. Both of those were expected to show positive signs, one from the standpoint of continuing low inflation, and secondly, some rebounding or stability and modest strength in the US retail sector. As much as that is indicative of what is happening south of the border, it also reflects on what's potentially happening here in Ontario, particularly since the US continues to be our major trading partner.

In the last quarter of 2009, Ontario's real gross domestic product—our GDP—increased by a very strong 1.6%. This was the second consecutive quarterly gain and the biggest single advance since the second quarter of 2004. That's important. It's important that we see some consecutive activity going on in GDP growth. But particularly when we look at it in the context of that magnitude and we look at it during that time frame since 2004 to now, this is the largest quarterly gain in the GDP. In January 2010, the Canadian GDP by industry advanced 0.6%. Even that exceeded economists' expectations, but Ontario, as I said, grew by 1.6%, a much better condition when one considers it on a national spectrum.

The growth in January marked the fifth consecutive monthly gain and the strongest increase since December 2006. Even at a national level, we're seeing all the indicators of a recovering economy. That doesn't mean it's a recovered economy. It doesn't mean that things are booming, by any means, at this point. But it means there is strength in the economy, it means there is confidence returning to the marketplace in a variety of sectors, and we look forward to good things in the future.

Ontario's economy is also on the rise. Just a few weeks ago, Honda Canada announced it will start up a second shift and add some 400 jobs at its second assembly plant in Alliston, Ontario, in early 2011.

Just before Easter, we had the opportunity to have the Japanese auto manufacturing association here in the legislative building doing a reception, inviting members of this Legislature to meet and chat with them. At that point in time, the Honourable Sandra Pupatello, our Minister of Economic Development, spoke to that particular group and welcomed them. I congratulated them and encouraged them to continue doing the good work they do here in Ontario and throughout Canada. At the same time, the president of Honda Canada spoke on behalf of JAMA to the assembled group that was there. They were expressing a tremendous amount of confidence about Ontario, as a place to do business in the automotive sector.

There's one thing I wasn't aware of that that particular sector—and so I don't misspeak, I'm going to cover myself a bit. I can't recall specifically whether the Honda president said Honda or whether he was speaking on



behalf of the Japanese automotive manufacturers in Canada and Ontario in particular, but he said there's this perception—and these are my words—that we import Japanese cars and that we bring in far more than we actually produce or would sell. The reality is, for every car they sell in Canada, they produce one. Some of the cars we buy are produced offshore and brought in, and some of the cars that we produce here are being exported. The reality is, all of those vehicles are being manufactured in Ontario, but their numbers are based on Canada-wide import-export. So Ontario is the hub of the Japanese automotive manufacturing sector in Canada.

I want to speak a little more about the Honda situation in Alliston. They attribute the second-shift announcement to the rebounding economy and obviously the increased demand for the Honda product. We hope, and we know, that the product that is being built there by Canadians with Canadian expertise and using offshore technology—those vehicles are not only being consumed here, but they are being exported elsewhere. So we not only have a domestic product, in effect, that we choose to use—many of us in this place may—but we also have a product that is being exported elsewhere.

The news from Honda in and of itself merely follows an announcement by General Motors. We tend to think of the Detroit Three as obviously being that homegrown North American product that has such a long history, that has gone through such troubled times of late. I know, as do some of my colleagues in this place, particularly from the Ajax-Pickering riding across from me and our friends from Whitby-Oshawa, Oshawa and Durham, the troubles that GM has seen over the past while.

When I first came to this place—and I'm trying to think of the project name that always escapes me as we move through these things—our government, at that time, strongly and adamantly supported investments in the automotive sector. There was a particular plan that GM was working on, and we had federal support along the way for that, and that helped GM at that point to plan for the future. As that program was moving forward, the bad economy took hold and GM found itself in a very difficult place. It was the support of the provincial and federal governments, along with the activities in the US, that allowed GM the time necessary to do some restructuring.

General Motors, just in the past few weeks, announced a third shift at its Oshawa facility, with many hundreds of employees being brought back to work, those who may have been laid off for an extended period.

One only needs to take a look as you drive down the road at the new Camaro—new now by a couple of years—or if you happen to see it going by on a truck. I was out of the country recently and, in doing that, as I see a Camaro go by on the road, I think of the fact that the only place it's made is Oshawa. It doesn't matter where you might go; if you see a new Camaro going by, you can think that that's kind of a homegrown product here in Ontario, just down the road from us, east of Toronto, in the Oshawa facility.

1550

General Motors is also going to increase production at its Canadian automotive manufacturing facility in Ingersoll. It's not just in Alliston; it's not just in Oshawa; it's in all of those manufacturing locations spread throughout Ontario that we are seeing the growth, the rebound in strength, and also the good products that are being made, the good engineering, but also the good workforce, the quality workforce, that's necessary to make the products that Ontarians want, that Canadians want and, frankly, that people want throughout the world.

This third shift in Oshawa will result in the recall of some 600 workers in October of this year, while the CAMI production additions will add about 700 new jobs in August of this year.

So we're looking, through the balance of 2010 and into 2011, whether it's the CAMI operation, the Oshawa operation or the Alliston operation, at hundreds and hundreds of new jobs or jobs being put back into the marketplace.

There are other indicators of recovery as well. Housing sales are at record levels. We only need look at the paper on a daily basis to see the activity level that's going on in the housing market. That's a good indicator of the economy. I think it's a good indicator of the economy primarily because it says that people are confident. They're confident about their jobs; they're confident about their capacity to make long-range plans. They are confident in the context of what they see for their families. That's a very strong indicator.

Not only is it a good indicator, but, frankly, it also invests a lot in the economy. When people buy homes, traditionally they will upgrade appliances. They may put in new carpeting. They will certainly paint; they will decorate. They will do landscaping at this time of year. So it's not only the purchase of the home itself but it's all the ancillary activity that goes with the purchase of a home. Whether that's a new home or a resale home, it really doesn't matter: There's a tremendous amount of investment going in, in the immediate marketplace that supports homes.

We've seen an increase in consumer and business confidence. They have been steadily increasing during recent months. Retail sales at the same time have been rising. I've mentioned this as it relates to housing, but it relates to a number of different sectors as well, where we're seeing a better retail market than we have.

Auto sales: We talked about the auto sector generally, about its manufacturing capacity, but auto sales have risen by some 23% from the December 2008 low point. So we've seen a considerable rebound in that marketplace.

The credit markets are stabilizing and the yield spreads are returning to normal, so we're seeing some degree of normality as well returning to the fiscal marketplace.

In March, Ontario employment rose by some 10,300 net new jobs. This was up for the eighth time in 10 months: a consistent growth in employment in Ontario.



Eight times in the past 10 months, we've seen growth, and in March we saw some 10,300 net new jobs in the economy here in Ontario.

Certainly, we here on the government side of the House are proud of that progress. I would suggest that probably members throughout this place are happy to see this type of economic activity going on, even if, for some reason, they may not fully, 100%, endorse the budget that the minister presented just a couple of weeks ago. I'm sure, during the course of debate over the next few days or more, that we may hear a dissenting opinion or two with respect to that budget, but there are few who could be unhappy with the economic situation and certainly the direction that the economic situation is currently taking.

That doesn't go to say, though, that many Ontario families aren't still coping with the degree of uncertainty that has been caused and continues to be caused by unemployment or underemployment. Companies big and small are still grappling with the new ways of doing business. Municipalities are struggling to respond to an increase in demand for services. Certainly, our work remains cut out for us.

The 2010 budget, though, is part of the McGuinty government's Open Ontario plan. It will benefit Ontario's families, its businesses and its communities.

We're going to build on the progress that is slowly but surely making steady headway towards the economic stability that we all want.

This budget lays out the measures to manage spending, to eliminate the deficit and to secure the province's long-term financial stability.

On March 8 in the speech from the throne, the Honourable David Onley unveiled Open Ontario, the McGuinty government's five-year plan to create new opportunities for jobs and economic growth.

We see the need for Ontario to be more open in a number of ways. We certainly need to be more open to global trade. We need to be more open to investment in this province, more open to new and fresh ideas, and more open to the people of the world. The McGuinty government's 2010 Ontario budget moves that plan forward and protects the progress that Ontarians have already made in our schools and in our hospitals as we work to eliminate the deficit that we find ourselves in, which has been caused by this global recession, and it sets out the government's priorities that will help people and help business.

The Ontario budget for this year details the government's investments in post-secondary education, as a priority; in jobs; and in growth in the north of this province, which has been an area hard-hit by the economic recession—not the only area but one that we all agree has seen a particularly bad situation because of the nature of the businesses that exist in northern Ontario.

We expect to continue our investments as well by establishing our full-day learning program and by investing in child care, and, given the time, I'll certainly comment more on our investment in child care, where we are picking up the slack that was left by the federal

government abandoning a program. We're investing some \$63.5 million in additional monies to make up for that loss of federal revenue to ensure that those who have daycare now, with help from the province and the federal government, will continue to have that help, but that help will come solely and singularly from the province of Ontario, not from the federal government.

We're going to continue working on our stimulus infrastructure plans and managing the economy of the province responsibly.

Ontario's colleges and universities play a very critical role in equipping people for success. That's why post-secondary education remains a top priority for our government. We will all well remember the Reaching Higher plan that we started some five years ago, or thereabouts now at this point, as a major initiative to give young people opportunities in post-secondary education by making significant investments in programs and facilities for post-secondary education. We want to continue that initiative. We want to continue that as part of the Open Ontario plan, so we're making a particular commitment this year by adding 20,000 new spaces to colleges and universities during this coming fiscal year, reflecting a new annual investment of approximately \$310 million in post-secondary operating grants.

We were discussing just a week or so ago—we wrapped it up today—the budget motion itself. I had the opportunity to speak in respect to the budget motion, and I mentioned the president of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and the president of Ryerson University, both of whom were here at the time of the throne speech. We talked subsequently to that, and how delighted they were that we continue to see post-secondary education as such a priority. They were speaking on behalf of their students, but also on behalf of the 20,000 new spaces that we will be creating as a result of this budget.

We're aggressively promoting Ontario's post-secondary education abroad. We want to encourage the best students from around the world to study and settle here and contribute to our economy. What a great way not only for those young people to come and learn from us, but it's an opportunity for us to learn from them. If we can attract the best and the brightest to come here as a place to learn, think of what our young people are going to have: the opportunity to learn from them, not only academically, not only sharing the academic challenges, but the culture that they bring with them; the opportunity for us to learn more about the cultural atmosphere, for our young people to be able to integrate themselves in that way with young people who want to study here in this country, to use that opportunity to contribute to our economy.

We want to improve the students' ability to navigate the Ontario post-secondary system by providing additional resources to support the implementation of a credit transfer system. I've been hearing, as have others, over the past few years now, in particular in my case from university and college students who are very anxious



about opportunities to be able to do what they call “credit transfer.” Why is it that a college student who acquires a set of skills and knowledge can’t use that skill knowledge capacity in the fashion of a credit to transfer to a university degree setting? There’s lots of work to do on that, but it’s the right thing to do. It’s the right thing to do not only from the standpoint of young people who want experiences in both college and universities and want to grow their skill sets, but it’s the right thing to do economically as well, because why should a student who wants to have those skills necessarily have to go through two different sets of systems over a protracted time that might not be necessary? So I’m anxious to see us move forward on the credit transfer system initiative, because I think it’s an important one that will pay dividends in the years to come.

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One of the things that we are creating through this budget is the new Ontario Online Institute, which will bring the best professors from across Ontario, from its post-secondary institutions, effectively into the homes—or, if they Wi-Fi, it could be into the local Starbucks or Tim Hortons for that matter; it doesn’t need to be into the home—of those students who want to pursue higher learning and want the opportunity to be able to hear from, learn from and interact in today’s technology with the best and brightest professors available. The Ontario Online Institute will be the foundation, I think, for that type of learning environment. Students will have the opportunity, not only within the context of their own course work area but in a particular area, to access the best minds, the most trained, those who have committed themselves to very specific kinds of areas that otherwise they wouldn’t get to in the absence of having technology available for that purpose.

More than a million Ontarians rely each year on Employment Ontario for help in finding work and acquiring job training. That’s a vast number. There’s a large number of Ontarians who need the help of Employment Ontario. We are boosting Ontario employment spending on jobs and skills in a very substantive way through this budget, and the special focus issue will be on workers affected by this global economic recession, which only makes sense.

We’re planning a new one-stop access, which will be in place to make it easier for job seekers, employers and communities to obtain the full range of programs and services they need. One-window shopping is the only way to go with these types of initiatives. You can’t have people trying to access multiple programs and initiatives. They need to have the opportunity to focus on job re-training for the purposes of employment.

We’re also launching the federal-provincial Targeted Initiative for Older Workers agreement to support skills training in hard-hit communities. Any time in these days that we can work together with other orders of government—in this instance the other order of government is the federal government—to do things together, in this instance establishing the Targeted Initiative for Older

Workers, it’s what our constituents in Ontario want us to do. Increasingly, we know in this place that Ontarians want their governments to work together in their interest, that in a time of economic challenge, there is little opportunity in the minds of Ontarians for governments not to find a means for co-operative initiatives. This is one key indicator of that, particularly in communities that have been hard-hit by the economic recession. We look forward to this particular initiative to serve under-employed older workers in those vulnerable communities in Ontario.

We’re not only investing in workers who find themselves dislocated or those who are a little more aging in the workplace, we’re also interested in and concerned with summer jobs, those young people who need summer opportunities. We’re investing this year an additional \$39 million in the summer jobs program, including some targeted resources for youths in high-needs neighbourhoods. So young people, those who are under- and unemployed within the general workforce, those who are older in the workforce and may find it more difficult to find a placement, we have an eye on each of them in an effort to make opportunities available for all of those groups.

The Ontario summer jobs program, though, that \$39 million, will help support 110,000 jobs and services for students this summer. That’s a large number of students. If one were to think about a fairly substantive-sized high school with 1,000 students—that’s not a huge one, but it’s also not terribly small—that’s a lot of young people. That would be 100 high schools plus full of students out working under the Ontario summer jobs program.

I mentioned that the north is one area that’s obviously been particularly hard hit, and I know that during the budget debate on Bill 16, there will be members of the caucus who are from northern Ontario who will want to speak to the budget. I look forward to hearing their comments, as I did during the budget motion that we debated just recently. They know the area well and they can speak to these elements of the budget that service their constituents and their business community in such an effective way.

In recent years, Ontario’s resource-based industries in the north have faced significant challenges. These include high energy costs and global competition. But as part of the Open Ontario plan, the budget will strengthen the northern economy. We’re going to be creating a three-year northern industrial electricity rate program, which will average \$150 million annually, and this will be for qualifying large industrial facilities to reduce their electricity prices by an average of about 25%. That’s no small amount of impact on a business in northern Ontario, a large industrial business, by providing that kind of electricity rate relief.

We’re going to be creating an office with dedicated staff to work on the new Ring of Fire initiative. This coordinator will lead the collective efforts in advancing the economic promise that exists in the area referred to as the Ring of Fire. I see the member from Thunder Bay—



Atitokan is in the House this afternoon, among others, and I anticipate that he will have more to say specifically on how this is going to provide opportunity for northerners in Ontario.

We're providing \$45 million over three years for a new project-based skills training program that will help aboriginal peoples and northern Ontarians who can participate in and benefit from emerging economic development opportunities.

So the breadth of opportunity for northern Ontario in this budget is extensive.

I'm not going to use the entire time that's on the clock, another few minutes only at this point, but I want to talk briefly about the green economy. Green energy is going to be a significant source of employment in the not-too-distant future. You only need to be looking at the news, reading the paper and listening carefully to many jurisdictions who realize now the importance of the green economy. It was just a few years ago that Premier McGuinty made it very clear that he saw and understood that Ontario can and should be a leader, not just in Canada but in North America, in the green economy. This budget takes us in that direction.

The Green Energy Act assists in taking us in that direction. We are attracting new investments in renewable energy products and we're promoting conservation in this province. The program that we have in place under the Green Energy Act is anticipated to create some 50,000 new Ontario jobs over the next three years, and we're certainly anticipating new investments in renewable generation by paying renewable energy generators under long-term contracts. You have to invest in that regard to ensure that you will get the investment in return. I'm not going to speak to Samsung directly to any extent, but I think we have to be aware of the \$7-billion commitment in this province and the impact it's going to have on our economy, as well as those others who are looking at investment and saying this is the place to be. If Samsung C&T Corp. or the Korea Electric Power Corp. are prepared to invest \$7 billion in Ontario, that's a place we need to be as well. We anticipate that there will be more to follow.

We are initiating, through the throne speech and the budget, new clean water technology. We are anticipating legislation on water to come forward as well. We see that as part of a green economy. It's not just about energy or electricity; it's as much or more about the future of water. In any documentary you might watch these days on TV about water, you will see the challenges worldwide in respect to water quantity, water quality and the demand and need for high-quality water, both from a consumer standpoint—human—but also from an industrial standpoint.

I recently spoke to Eco-Tek in my riding and the work they do. I'm not going to speak to them again as such, but just to say that there are companies in Ontario that have shown tremendous leadership in providing high-quality water for industrial purposes, and we need to capitalize on that expertise. It's these kinds of initiatives

that will drive us to them and engage them in a fashion that will help us help Ontarians in their future.

We're going to look for new markets. We're certainly not fixated on our current marketplace; we're not fixated just on Ontario or Canada, or even our major trading partner, the US. We are going to look for other markets in which to sell not only our products but, more importantly, our technologies. We are going to sell our capacity to help others develop in their community, as opposed to just selling them some product or a particular service.

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The budget this year provides a very focused strategy as to where we need to be at a time when we are faced with a significant deficit, and we acknowledge and recognize that. We have a clear plan as to how to eliminate that deficit over a responsible period of time. We are not overstating the depth of the problem we have been facing and that we are slowly working our way out of. But more importantly we want to ensure that as we move out of this, we don't leave behind those who are vulnerable; we don't leave behind our health and our schools; we don't leave behind those who need university education; and we don't abandon our partners in the municipal sector and the infrastructure requirements they have and so desperately need. We're going to do those things. We're going to continue to focus on public service. We're going to support our partners. We're going to ensure that young people, those who are vulnerable and those who are out of work still have us there as their partners at their side and in support.

I'm proud to say that the McGuinty government has the right plan for the time. Plans always have to fill a spot in time, a period in time. Any given plan won't work in every instance, so we have to find the right plan for the right time, and this is it. Open Ontario is the right plan. It will invest in Ontarians by providing cornerstones for growth while creating the environment to nourish that growth. Our goal is education for all who seek it, jobs for those who want them and programs and supports for those who need them in this province.

Ontario has what it takes to overcome the odds we've been faced with, and already the province is acknowledged worldwide for the strength and stability of our financial sector, among others. Our workplace can compete with the best in the world. We look forward to doing that. We believe this budget will help us do that, and at the end of the debate I hope that all members of this Legislature can see their way to support the 2010-11 McGuinty budget as presented by the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Dwight Duncan.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's a pleasure to rise in the debate today. I know you'll be hearing from our finance critic, the MPP for Parry Sound-Muskoka, in a little bit from now. That said, we do have serious concerns with the way Ontario's economy is progressing to get out of this recession. Unfortunately, we do not believe this budget addresses those very significant issues; namely, I



might point out, it doesn't deal significantly with the debt nor the deficit.

As you recall, this budget has tripled our reliance on federal welfare payments. It has doubled the debt, and our deficit is now higher than that of the other nine provinces combined. So when you're looking at a road map to move our province forward, it certainly wasn't contained within this Liberal budget. It didn't give or offer much hope to Ontarians, much less those I represent in Nepean–Carleton, who are looking for some tax relief that would help them get through some of the rising hydro costs that are coming as a result of the Liberals' Green Energy Act. They would have liked to see some targets and focus with respect to education instead of just dumping money.

It is a privilege, as I mentioned, to be able to participate in the budget debate. As you know, we already spent some time debating the budget motion, which I felt privileged to be able to speak to for about 20 minutes on the priorities of the people of Nepean–Carleton. I was able to communicate their values and their views on the floor of this chamber. As you know, I've said several times that we care so much about strong families, safer streets and self-reliance in our community. Many of the values I carry to this place were built on those archetypal family values that were brought up on the farm. Again, I like to communicate those values and stand up for the people I represent, who are hard-working families, who are seniors and who are small business people.

Again, I look forward to hearing from our finance critic as we engage in the debate, and I look forward to participating in the debate more frequently.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** To say that any budget doesn't have some good news in it would be wrong. I'm sure that if you look at this budget close enough, you probably can find something in it that somebody will like. But to position this budget as one that is going to be the economic be-all and end-all to fixing the economic problems in Ontario, I think, is a real stretch of the imagination.

We know that there are some structural problems within the economy of Ontario. We have seen de-industrialization commence in this province, in places across this province, north and south, when it comes to the jobs that are leaving Ontario and going offshore when it comes to manufacturing and the transformation of natural resources.

We have seen a change to the economics, as far as how money is raised in the marketplace, when it comes to being able to sustain the investments that are needed in order to allow companies to continue flourishing or to just survive, or for new ones to start up.

When I look at this budget, I say to myself: Where in this budget are we really responding to these issues? The reality is that we're not. We're not dealing with the fundamental problems that I think are key to what needs to be done in order to get the economy of Ontario turned around.

Under all of this is the problem that all Ontarians, including myself, want to be able to survive by knowing that we're going to have jobs in the future. To do that, we need to have a government that's prepared to put in place what needs to be done in order to make that happen. I will have an opportunity later on in debate to outline some of that, but I just want to say to my honourable colleague across, whom I have a lot of respect for: I understand the role that you're trying to play, and you're trying to spin this as being the best thing since sliced bread. But I've got to tell you: There ain't much bread there and there's not much spread to go on it. If you're trying to spin it that way, I think a lot of people are going to go hungry in the short term.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** I'm pleased to rise and make comment to the presentation given by the parliamentary assistant, Mr. Arthurs, the member for Pickering–Scarborough East, as he was talking about Bill 16 and the Budget Measures Act and what will flow from it.

He had a wide-ranging discussion on what is contained in our budget, a lot of it flowing from our five-year Open Ontario plan, which is designed to attract new investment and create jobs here in Ontario.

He also spoke about not only jobs but the fact that the economy here and in other countries around the world, but particularly here in Ontario, is looking much improved. It is moving in the right direction, to say the very least. These modest gains that we are enjoying now need to be nurtured, and the government recognizes that through our Open Ontario plan.

Last week, in regard to education, learning and new jobs, the federal member and myself were able to provide some monies at a groundbreaking ceremony at St. Clair College, the Thames campus, which is better known perhaps as the Chatham campus, to open a new tech and trade centre. All of the discussion during that groundbreaking was naturally based around our need to compete through this college, and the opportunities that trades and technology will give to our young people, going into the future.

Certainly, we've built on that education component of enhancing our economy and giving people an opportunity to do what they do best, which is to succeed here and work in Ontario.

I'm so very pleased that, in this particular case, the federal and provincial governments came together to enhance this college. The campus is expanding in leaps and bounds. There will be good things coming from this, as we see new students moving into those jobs, particularly through our Open Ontario plan.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Wellington–Halton Hills.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I was glad to be in the House for the presentation this afternoon by the member for Pickering–Scarborough East, who is also the Minister of Finance's parliamentary assistant. If I'm not mistaken, he has been the minister's parliamentary assistant since his election



here in 2003, so he has a lot of experience in that capacity. I enjoyed serving with him for some of those years on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. I have a high personal regard for the member, although we're on different sides of the House so occasionally we will disagree.

I would like to ask him a question, and that is: How would the member explain to this House that the government is going to be able to balance its budget by 2018, given the fact that the assumption that is being used in that balanced budget plan is that the government will contain and hold its spending to less than 1.9% per year after 2012? Given the fact that this government has never been able to hold its program spending increases anywhere close to that number; given the fact that it's highly unlikely, with the various pressures on the health care system, the pension system and the uncertainty in the economy going forward in the next few years, how does the parliamentary assistant expect us to believe that that balanced budget plan is credible, given the fact that that assumption exists? And, of course, that's in the budget papers. I know all members of the House had the opportunity to go through the budget papers, but it's sort of in the fine print of the budget. How does the member expect us to believe that the balanced budget plan is going to be possible and how does he expect us to believe that that is a credible plan? I would appreciate an explanation.

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**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Pickering–Scarborough East, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** The time is limited. I certainly appreciate the comments from the members from Nepean–Carleton and Timmins–James Bay, as well as Chatham–Kent–Essex and Wellington–Halton Hills.

Just a couple of things in the limited time I have. The member from Nepean–Carleton was speaking a bit about families. I think that families, generally, will be very pleased with our initiatives on full-day junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten, as we plan for full-day learning to provide the best foundation for learning possible in the education system to prepare those young people for their longer-term future.

I think that families will be pleased with our commitment to post-secondary education as a continuing high priority so that their children have the best opportunity for the best possible jobs that this province and this country can create in the future.

I think they would be pleased even with the short-term initiatives, such as the summer jobs program, in which we're looking at opportunities for some 110,000 young people across Ontario. So I think there are a number of things that families would be very, very pleased with.

The member from Timmins–James Bay, I'm looking forward to his time. I think his comments are generally, "There's always some good news somewhere in some budget, if you look hard enough for it." I'm anxious; when he gets on his feet, he will have the opportunity to

tell us what, in this budget, for him as an opposition member, he finds as particularly good news, because budgets aren't intended to be all things for all people and the end of all problems. They are strategies that provide windows of opportunity for growth, for economic recovery, particularly at this point in time.

The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex spoke in part to the co-operation necessary by orders of government when he talked about the initiatives on federal and provincial governments.

I think I've run out of time, but I'm going to get back to the member across the way from Wellington–Halton Hills in respect to his question.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'll start out by saying that the member from Wellington–Halton Hills didn't hear his response from the parliamentary assistant to the question that he posed.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I only had two minutes.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Would you like another two minutes to answer that question?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I don't think we'd get the answer in another two minutes, either.

Anyway, it's my pleasure to lead off debate on the budget bill, Bill 16, to provide some comments from the perspective of the official opposition.

Bill 16 is An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts. In fact, it contains some 31 schedules, and I will be commenting on some of those. It's interesting that several of the schedules have nothing to do with budget measures, but I will elaborate on those later. I'm sure, this being the budget bill, I know, Mr. Speaker, you're going to give me free rein to be able to speak to the many different schedules. This is one bill that I should be able to stay on track with because it covers just about everything.

The PC caucus is very concerned about the state of Ontario's economy, and we're very concerned with the spending habits of the McGuinty government and this government's policies that continue to damage the economy and the prospective recovery of the economy.

In the PC caucus, we've been calling on this government to take steps to create jobs, curb their out-of-control spending and get serious with the deficit and debt. Just this afternoon, as a matter of fact, I met with a CAW coalition—they were just part of a coalition that was down at Queen's Park today—from Timmins, very concerned about the Xstrata Kidd Creek copper smelter there, and the pending loss of jobs in that area. I'll speak to that and the government's policies to do with the north, as I have time in my leadoff.

Ontario has one of the highest jobless rates in the country, at 9.1%. Those employment numbers are a serious concern for our caucus, and they continue to be a concern with the latest job numbers from March 2010. Ontario suffered a net loss of 3,900 full-time jobs. Even when replacement part-time jobs are factored in, the



McGuinty Liberals are still more than 100,000 jobs short of their own target. Mr. McGuinty is very good at promising jobs; he has promised many of them. He's not so good when it comes to actually delivering on those promised jobs.

When the previous Ontario PC government took office in 1995, there were 872,600 manufacturing jobs in Ontario. That number grew to 1,072,800 jobs by 2003; please note the trend going up. That was under Mike Harris and Ernie Eves. Dalton McGuinty inherited those 1,072,800 manufacturing jobs. Today, sadly, there are only 793,800 manufacturing jobs remaining, fewer than what existed at the end of the Bob Rae era. Of the 279,000 net manufacturing jobs lost by Mr. McGuinty, a full 206,000 disappeared before the recession hit—that's before.

But one sector that keeps growing under this government is the public sector. Under Dalton McGuinty, the number of high-priced public sector executives, managers and appointees making over \$100,000 since 2003 has tripled. The public sector has grown at a rate eight times the private sector. In 2003, there were 20,249 government employees who made six figures. That number has now skyrocketed to 63,836.

But I think what is most surprising is that last year, in what was a recession year, you'd think that everything was just wonderful in the province of Ontario, because in a year when there was a recession, this government increased by 19% those people making more than \$100,000 a year. I ask, is that responsible in the midst of a recession? In particular, they've greatly increased the number of people in their new health bureaucracy—the LHINs—who are earning over \$100,000.

The McGuinty government has done little to keep jobs from leaving the province. Small and medium-sized businesses are the only sector that has consistently created jobs. If you talk to small and medium-sized businesses, what's their number one issue? It's the red tape they have to deal with, and so one way to support them is through red tape reduction. Red tape costs money and kills jobs. In Ontario, red tape and regulation are at an all-time high.

The McGuinty government talks about its Open for Business and Open Ontario plans. What are the Certified Management Accountants saying about what is really happening on the ground? They did a survey of their members. Half of them said that in the past number of years it was the same, and half said that it's worse. So it's either the same or getting worse.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business's last report shows that red tape in Ontario costs businesses some \$11 billion a year—\$11 billion.

The CFIB's regulatory accountability progress report gave Ontario three thumbs—I might point out that three thumbs are not good—one for no publicly reported measure for red tape, one for no current measurement of red tape and also no permanent commitment to report on red tape. These are all things that our leader, Tim Hudak, and the PC caucus recognize as necessities.

Red tape reduction requires a change in attitude that starts at the top. It starts in the Premier's office. It starts with the Premier showing leadership, right through cabinet and down to the bureaucrats. There must be a change in the culture of government. This government is so prescriptive in the way they write their rules and regulations. I think they need to be much more outcomes-oriented rather than based on this prescriptive and, I would also say, punitive approach that they take to dealing with small and medium-sized business. We need to see it for the vitality of this province, the health of business, the creation of jobs in this province.

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We need to see that change of attitude where the government inspector, whether it's the Ministry of the Environment inspector, the labour inspector or the WSIB—I'm sure they probably go into small business as well. Instead of coming into the business with their infraction book and saying, "Here's what you've done wrong and here's your fine," instead of doing that, what they should be doing is coming around, first of all, and communicating what the rules are, because most businesses are buried under this huge number of rules. They don't know what the rules are and they're trying to run a business. So the McGuinty government needs to simplify those rules, communicate them much more clearly to business, and they need those inspectors, when they come around and show up at the business, to actually say, "Here are some new rules coming down the pipe and here's what you should do to try to comply with those rules." Because 95%, 98%, probably 99% of businesses out there want to comply with the rules, want to do the right thing, but when the inspector just shows up and tells them, "Here's your fine," that's not helpful. It doesn't achieve the desired goal of the regulation.

They need to be there to communicate the rules, assist the business in complying with the rules, maybe cut them a little bit of time to be able to actually comply with the rules and then be of some assistance. Then, along with simpler rules based on outcomes, I think we would see an environment where business would thrive, where they'd be hiring people, where they would be creating those jobs and the wealth that this government needs particularly with the next item that I'm going to talk about, the next item that needs a culture change, and that is the spending addiction that this government has. The McGuinty government has a spending problem. They do not have a revenue problem; they have a spending problem. I see some of the members smiling, but it's absolutely the truth.

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** Public services.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Yes, we need public services, but there's an awful lot of waste in the spending of this McGuinty government, and I'd like to go through some of the numbers. It underscores what our leader, Tim Hudak, and our entire caucus have been saying now for years.

When this government came into power in 2002-03, the budget spending was \$68.8 billion. I'll just walk



through how the spending's increased in the last few short years. In 2003-04, it was \$73.9 billion; in 2004-05, it was \$79.4 billion; in 2005-06, it was \$83.9 billion; in 2006-07, \$88.1 billion, in 2007-08, \$96.5 billion; in 2008-09, \$99.9 billion. Then in 2009-10 it jumps up to \$117.7 billion, and it's projected to be basically \$126 billion this year and \$124.1 billion next year. I might point out that even in the midst of a recession, the spending is up 7% this year over last year. So Dalton McGuinty will have increased government spending by 70% from 2003-04—that was the first real budget year—from \$73.9 billion to the \$126 billion in 2010-11. Dalton McGuinty will have increased program spending by a shocking 95%, from \$59.39 billion to \$115.9 billion.

I pause in my notes because I noted that in one of the last comments the parliamentary assistant made he talked about full-day learning. I would say that on this side of the House we would agree that it's a good concept. It's also a very, very expensive program—estimates of \$1.5 billion to \$6 billion. If you're an Ontario family and your mortgage is run right up there or the credit card's maxed out, you don't go out and buy a shiny new car, no matter how much you might want it. Unfortunately, despite this year's \$21.3-billion deficit, the government's finding new ways to spend money despite the fact that they're not even meeting some of the most basic needs that are out there. They keep coming up with new ways to spend money despite having this massive deficit. Rather than hit the original 2009 budget target of \$104.7 billion for 2010-11 program spending, budget 2010 projects the Liberals will spend \$115.9 billion, an increase of 11% in projected program spending.

Even the former Bank of Canada head, David Dodge, has commented on this. A few weeks back, he told a Toronto business audience that Ontario's spending is outpacing revenue growth so quickly that the result will be a structural deficit—that's not a good term: "structural deficit"—equivalent to 3.5% of the province's economic output by 2020, even in good economic times.

Revenue is projected to be \$106.9 billion in 2010-11, and that's a provincial record high. So it's not a revenue problem. It's a spending problem. If they had stuck to their original budgets, they'd have balanced budgets. But they keep finding ways to spend more money, and a lot of it not necessarily getting great benefits.

Revenues are expected to rise at a rate of 5.1% between 2009-10 and 2012-13, but spending has resulted in record deficits and record debt. Ontario's \$21.3-billion deficit is larger than every other provincial deficit combined.

I'd like to talk briefly about deficit and debt. The deficit projection for 2009-10 is a bit of a moving target. Last year at the March budget, the budget papers said the deficit for the year that just ended on March 31, 2010—and that was after the recession had started, so there were no surprises there—was a \$14.1-billion deficit. Of course, we know that, I think it was in June of the year, suddenly the deficit went up to \$18 billion. And then, I believe it was in September, it went up to a projected \$24.7 billion. The day before the budget came out—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** It came down.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Yes, miraculously. The day before the budget came out, the deficit dropped \$3 billion. Surprise, surprise. And when you look at the magic that the government did to achieve that sudden surprise drop of \$3 billion—well, what was it? It wasn't any control of spending, that's for sure. It was that they didn't spend quite as much on H1N1 as planned, and there were a couple of other "just move the numbers around," and bam, there's \$3 billion.

The scary part, looking at this, though, is that budget 2010 projects that Dalton McGuinty's deficits will continue for eight more years. So that will be some nine consecutive years of deficits. That would total \$116.6 billion in additional deficits, with the balanced budget returning in 2017-18. Cumulative interest on debt payments by 2017-18—when the books return to balance, we hope—will be \$117.4 billion in interest. So the interest on the debt will equal, in 2017-18, \$16.2 billion. That's nearly double the \$8.6 billion from 2008-09. I say that that plan is just not credible whatsoever. When you look at this eight-year plan to get us back to a balanced budget beyond two elections, it's just not credible.

The other scary part about it is, we know interest rates are trending up, and for every 1% increase in interest rates, that's another \$500 million. So, yes—

*Interjections.*

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**Mr. Norm Miller:** I hear members opposite talking about spending. Well, if you'd been here earlier, you would have heard how I was talking about how you have no problem spending. You have no problem spending. Through you, Mr. Speaker, they certainly know how to spend. Do they know how to spend wisely? That is the question: Do they know how to spend wisely? I'd say the answer is no, no, no.

The debt: What is happening with the debt? The debt will increase from \$148.7 billion in 2003-04 to some \$289.3 billion in 2012-13. This confirms our assertion that, as we've been saying, Dalton is the debt doubler. Dalton McGuinty would double Ontario's debt by fiscal year 2012-13.

Also, sadly, the 2010 budget also confirms that last year Ontario became a have-not program. We received some \$300 million from the federal government last year. Ontario is now on track to get some \$972 million in equalization payments from the better-performing provinces this year—nearly triple over last year's, and who knows what it will be next year?

As I've been alluding to, you just can't believe the numbers. They changed four times in the past year. They changed four times in the last year.

You remember NUGs, non-utility generators? I seem to recall that in one of the first budgets this government did they had to make a revision of \$4 billion because of the way they tried to treat those non-utility generators' liability in the budget.

As I already mentioned, they made some interesting changes to reduce the deficit by \$3 billion the day before the budget came out.



I would also say: What is the math behind the \$500-million transfer to the pension benefits guarantee fund? I note there's a \$525-million line item that's funding the Ontario teachers' pension fund as well.

I'd also say, why is the WSIB unfunded liability not part of the books as well? There's some \$12 billion in unfunded liability at the WSIB. That has grown significantly under this government. Just a few short years ago, it was about \$8 billion. It has gone up 50% under this government in just a few short years. I'd say that points to the need for a review of what's going on at the WSIB. That's one of the things we've been asking for in our 10 for 2010 plan.

The unfunded liability has grown 50%, despite the fact that lost-time injuries are down. Despite those lost-time injuries being down, the benefits and the costs per injury are up significantly. Also, we have a much higher employer premium rate, especially when compared to provinces like BC and Alberta. There's something not right at the WSIB.

We've brought up, through freedom-of-information requests, some of the questionable spending that has gone on there, the untendered contracts. They're obviously not managing the WSIB very well at all, when you see that \$12-billion unfunded liability. That is not part of the province's books. Obviously, if that was included, it would affect the province's credit rating.

Health care: The budget increases health care spending by \$2.6 billion, from \$43.5 billion in 2009-10 to \$46.1 billion.

I should remind folks that there has been some \$15 billion that has been taxed from people through Dalton McGuinty's new health tax. Yet despite all that extra revenue, on the ground we're still seeing challenges in health care.

In Parry Sound-Muskoka, they're in the midst of a deficit reduction plan for Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare. They're cutting back on the number of beds in Bracebridge. In Huntsville, they just shut down the Burk's Falls—what was a hospital; it became urgent care, and now it's closed. Elsewhere around the province, I know, as I travelled around with the pre-budget hearings, we heard about emergency rooms closing in Fort Erie and Port Colborne. Hospitals are at 100% capacity. Also, the numbers are all going the wrong way. In 2005, there were some 12,000 people waiting for long-term-care beds to become available. Now that number has hit an all-time record: It's 26,000. For five consecutive months, starting in September 2009, 17% of all hospital beds in province were occupied by alternate-level-of-care patients.

As we've been pointing out, some \$176 million has gone toward office supplies and salaries at the new health bureaucracy created by the McGuinty government, the LHINs, the local health integration networks, since 2006. We note that the number of people, as I previously mentioned, making the big dollars has gone up significantly at those local health integration networks—some of them not reported, some of them in the endnotes to the sunshine list.

Of course, \$1 billion was wasted by the McGuinty government on the eHealth agency, with very little to show for it.

The budget says the McGuinty government is committed to improving the accountability of the health care system. Certainly, I think you'd agree there's a great need for that. But when you look at the fine print, when you go to schedule 16, for example, of Bill 16, it delays the legislative review of the local health integration networks for several years. Under the Local Health System Integration Act, 2006, the McGuinty government is legally required to subject the LHINs to a full public legislative review by March 28, 2010. So rather than be forced to subject the LHINs to public scrutiny, the McGuinty Liberals, in the budget papers, on page 164, instead put in a provision that eliminates the obligation to hold this review. As I said, if you go to schedule 16, quite conveniently the LHIN review is essentially postponed till after the next election.

I would argue that the LHINs allow the Minister of Health to defer responsibility for health care decisions. That is, except on the occasion when there happens to be a by-election going on and it's becoming a big issue, as we saw with the Toronto Centre by-election, when all of a sudden, the Grace Hospital became a big issue. Then the minister stepped right in, \$15 million appeared, and that got beyond the election date.

During the pre-budget consultations, certainly we heard criticisms to do with the LHINs. I know in Niagara, their Yellow Shirt Brigade characterized the LHINs as being a siphon on the front-line health care dollars, so that instead of that money going to doctors, nurses and procedures, it's going to office space and bureaucracy, with very little value added.

I recall a few years back, when the LHINs were just starting, that Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare had a deficit of \$1.6 million. At the exact same time that they had this \$1.6-million deficit, guess what the local LHIN was spending on office space and renovations? \$1.6 million.

So that's a good comparison. I know, locally, the people would much rather see the money go to the front-line health service versus office space and salaries etc.

It's disappointing to see in the budget that the government is adding more layers of bureaucracy. They're spending \$8.5 million in 2010-11 to create up to 14 regional coordination centres to organize and manage local diabetes programs.

I'd like to go to schedule 5, because I'm certainly hearing a lot about schedule 5. Schedule 5 is the drug—there are actually two schedules. Schedule 5 is one that deals with the Drug Interchangeability and Dispensing Fee Act. I'm hearing a lot of criticism from people who depend on pharmacies. It's not just the small, independent pharmacies—certainly they are. It's customers. It's also some of the larger ones like Shoppers, for example.

I received this from Shoppers Drug Mart. They're up in arms. Spokeswoman Tammy Smitham said that the



Liberal government's decision to slash generic drug costs and pharmacy allowances could leave patients without timely access to their prescriptions.

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"The convenience, access to prescriptions and pharmaceutical services will be impacted," said Smitham, regional director for Shoppers Drug Mart. "At the end of the day, these cuts are going to hurt patients and customers most."

"The Liberals have announced plans to reduce reimbursement to pharmacies for generic drug costs under the Ontario drug benefit program from 50% of the equivalent brand-name drug to 25%.

"While this will lower drug costs and mean less spending on the province's part, Smitham said consumers don't understand what they'll be losing in the process....

"Smitham said these cuts could mean losing that 24-hour status and force reduced store hours, or even layoffs, if necessary.

"Those are definitely possibilities, and we don't want to do those things," Smitham said. "Things like free delivery—we might have to add a charge now. Allowances also pay for blood-glucose monitoring, and we were planning on hiring 350 summer students across the province."

So despite paying more for health care, that \$15 billion, Ontarians still continue to get less.

That's a big company, but I'm also hearing—and in fact, when I go back up to my riding this week, I've had a few people with real concerns contact me who want to meet with me on Friday, to do with this part of bill.

But just to give an idea of some of the concerns I've already received, here's a constituent writing to me:

"Dear Mr. Miller,

"I am one of your constituents, and I am also a Ontario community pharmacy customer and patient.

"I am strongly opposed to the Ontario government's massive \$1 billion per year cut to community pharmacy funding. I depend on the accessible advice and services I get from my pharmacy. I want to ensure that my pharmacist is there when I need them. I want to know that I can talk to my pharmacist after work, when I can't get to my doctor's office, or when my doctor's office is closed. I want to know that my pharmacy will continue to be able to provide valuable health care services in my community.

"So please tell Mr. McGuinty and Health Minister Matthews to stop the cuts to the neighbourhood health care my community pharmacy provides.

"Thank you for this, and for your ongoing support to the Parry Sound–Muskoka area!"

That's from Andrew Fisher, who lives in Parry Sound.

Another email I received from the area:

"Dear Norm Miller,

"I am deeply concerned about the new proposed cuts to pharmacies. The proposed discontinuation of professional allowances while allowing a minuscule increase in dispensing fees is concerning. Currently, pharmacists use professional allowances to compensate the actual cost of

processing a prescription and to enhance patient care. Two studies (one from Ontario and one from British Columbia) have found that the actual cost of processing a prescription is approximately \$12-13, so increasing the dispensing fee by \$1 to \$8 creates a large discrepancy.

"Furthermore, pharmacies use professional allowances to fund services and enhance patient care—such as delivery of medications, patient education material, and private counselling rooms. If professional allowances are discontinued, patients' care would be compromised, and patients would be required to pay for these services. Additionally, with the proposed decrease in professional allowances, it looks doubtful that pharmacists will be able to provide the expanded scope of practice that is outlined in Bill 179.

"Please let me know your comments on this topic."

That's from Ross Hamill.

I just received this email today—I'm sure the government won't be reading out this concerned email. This one's from Cliffside Pharmacy in Scarborough. It's addressed—I was cc'd—to Deb Matthews:

"Dear Minister Matthews,

"I am writing in response to your letter dated April 12, 2010"—so this was written April 13—"addressed to Mr. Dennis Darby, Ms. Nadine Saby and Mr. Ben Shenouda.

"Direct quote from your Honourable Health Minister Deb Matthews:

"Clean up the abused system

"Withheld their services—deny public access

"Hold patient hostage

"Widespread unaccountable and inappropriate practices,

"Lucrative and inscrutable source."

The author goes on to write: "I have been a pharmacist for 20 years. I always feel proud as a health care professional, a mentor for pharmacy students and international foreign graduates, a preceptor for future pharmacists and a business owner as a chain franchisee and independent owner.

"I have always heard words like friendly, caring, knowledgeable, and neighbourhood pharmacist to describe me.

"During the past 20 years, I can recall many incidents that I personally delivered medication to cancer patients, to seniors, to mothers with sick children during a snowstorm, and also delivered after the store was closed. I clearly remember that week my store was broken into three times. I went back to the store after midnight, had the windows repaired and then continued to work my eight-hour shift so that all my patients were being served.

"I worked on my days off, including Sundays, dispensing and delivering medication to nursing home residents. I spent my own time, unpaid, teaching my students. Throughout those 20 years, I never had the privilege of a meal break, and when we got busy, not even a washroom break.

"However, the above quote from your honourable minister is a direct insult to over 11,000 registered pharmacists in Ontario and a denial of all the hard-working,



dedicated, caring community pharmacists working day in and day out to serve patients.

"How can we engage in an honest, thoughtful challenge of your policies if you've already deemed all of us dishonest and portrayed us as criminals? How can we continue to negotiate with you when you already have your mind set? You are only asking us to confirm and acknowledge your policy."

The pharmacist goes on to go through, point by point, the various points in the minister's letter and concludes by saying, "I'm looking forward to a constructive and mutually respectful atmosphere rather than the inflammatory tone that has been utilized by your office thus far, to ensure a sustainable reimbursement model for all pharmacies so I can focus on my patient care."

I'd say that the official opposition is just concerned about what this is going to mean on the ground to families and seniors who are looking for the help of their pharmacist. I think the pharmacists have put forward proposals to try to save costs for the health care system, but the government is not listening to them and is not working with them, and I think that is unfortunate. I'm sure I will get more perspective on this when I meet with some constituents when I get back to the riding this weekend.

I'd like to go on to schedule 26 of the bill, and that's the Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act, 2010. This is the schedule of the act that is supposed to signal government restraint. But as is so often the case with this government, it's more smoke and mirrors, more optics than reality.

What are they doing? Well, they're freezing the wages on what I'd call the easier part; that is, the non-unionized part of the public service. You have a million public sector workers, not including those who work for municipalities. The great majority of that one million public sector workers is unionized, and they aren't dealing with that part. They're dealing with the tip of the wage iceberg, as I call it, the non-unionized part immediately.

But when you read the actual bill, there are also a number of loopholes, so even that sector can still get increases in wages. If you get performance recognition, if you take additional training, if there's extra room in your pay scale, you can still get a raise. So they're not that serious even about that part, and they put off the biggest part of the challenge of trying to rein in spending.

I might point out that wages are about 50% of the budget. Despite the recession going on, they've already negotiated what I would call contracts that are just not responsible—in most cases, 3% increases over a number of years—and they're aren't touching those until the contracts come due. Conveniently, most of them happen to come due after the next election.

You know, this government has a very cozy relationship with the unions, and I think this shows they are just not serious about dealing with their spending problem. Unfortunately, all of us are going to be responsible, as time goes on, as they double the debt over their time in office.

I'd like to go to another example of the government's irresponsible spending and just not doing their due diligence, and that is the issue of severance for the sales tax collectors who were previously collecting the Ontario retail sales tax and will now be collecting the HST. These tax collectors, come July 1 when the McGuinty government's new HST comes into effect, are not going to lose their jobs. They may not even switch offices. They'll probably have a different business card. But they're going to collect some \$45,000 severance from the McGuinty government.

1700

This government had the time and the power to negotiate reasonable collective agreements. They've been the government for a number of years. The BC government is implementing the HST and they aren't paying severance to people who are not losing their jobs. In fact, these tax collectors are actually getting an increase in pay. This is an affront to hard-working middle class families that are paying their taxes.

I've been getting some mail on this issue for sure. Here's an example.

"I assume"—this is the letter—"that you are familiar with the above issue so I will focus this note on my comments.

"The payment of severance to these provincial tax collectors despite the continuation of their employment is unacceptable and the Liberal government must find a solution to claw back or not pay these amounts. The employees are being unjustifiably enriched and no one would agree with these payments if it weren't for the provisions in their labour contract. The labour contract does not make it right and the government should stand up and reverse the payments.

"The other acceptable solution would be to ensure that these people are truly being severed. Your government"—meaning the McGuinty government—"should then work with Ottawa to deny these individuals a position with the federal government. However, because of their expertise and Ottawa's desire to hire more tax collectors, this is obviously the less desirable solution. (I don't agree with hiring more tax collectors since the PST/GST harmonization should reduce admin costs, meaning fewer combined tax collectors. This is also something that your government should aim to achieve as part of the harmonization.)"

The letter continues: "It is obvious that the Liberal government is ignoring the substance of this severance issue, taking the less contentious route, and not acting in the interests of the taxpayers. This is very costly and unacceptable given the economic and fiscal conditions in Ontario that we live in today.

"I urge the Liberal government to deal with this issue and ensure that none of these employees receive this severance payment and continue their employment as tax collectors."

I think that is reflective of the way the vast majority of Ontarians feel, especially those people who are just trying to earn a living. They recognize that if you don't



lose your job—the reason you get severance is, it's a transition between jobs. If you're not losing your job, then you shouldn't be getting severance, just like the BC tax collectors won't be getting it. Unfortunately, the McGuinty government wasn't paying attention when they made agreements to do with the HST. As a result, there's an additional \$25-million cost.

The official opposition will be proposing a budget bill amendment on this issue. We've been working on it. It's going to affect section 50.1. This is the new amendment we're going to put in: "The transfer of any public servants, as defined by the Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006, pursuant to" the "comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement referred to in section 50, and annexes and agreements thereto, shall in no way be deemed a dismissal under s. 39 of the Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006."

The purpose of this amendment that we're going to put forward is to support the principle that if you do not lose your job, you do not get the severance, and rectify the McGuinty Liberals' decision to pay six-month severance packages, worth as much as \$45,000 each, to more than 1,250 HST tax collectors who will transfer to the federal government without losing a day of work.

Tim Hudak and the official opposition will be putting that amendment forward. I think most Ontarians would recognize that that's a reasonable amendment. It would save the Ontario taxpayers some \$25 million in costs.

I'd like to get to some other parts of the bill. In the bill there are energy rebates for the north. Certainly, the issue of rising energy costs is of real concern. I got an email from a constituent of mine that illustrates what it's like for many people out there who are struggling to pay increasing energy costs.

The energy policy of the government is scary, is the way I'd look at it. They've got the Green Energy Act, which we know for sure is going to drive energy costs up—absolutely no question about it. There has been an application to increase energy costs by basically 10% this year. Starting July 1, there will be another 8% on your energy bill. I'm hearing from all kinds of constituents—smart meters have been put into effect. They aren't even operating yet, and yet I'm hearing from many constituents—and I've heard from other MPPs—that people's energy bills are going up significantly for some reason, despite just the change in the meters. I don't know what that's all about, but I've heard from many people.

I'd just like to refer to this email that I think demonstrates the situation for a lot of people. It's an email I received on the weekend. Some of it is kind of a short form, so it may not come out quite as clearly as I might like:

"I'm in need of a little help. I've been having this ongoing problem with Hydro One since last winter in 2009 until now, April 9, 2010. I have had extremely high hydro bills—I mean like \$1,000 to \$2,000 in one month. I have made arrangements and followed through with them. I have made a one-lump-sum [payment] of \$1,500 and now I have been paying them \$400 a month because

that's all I could afford to pay. I'm not working. My husband is the only one working at this time. I had to quit my job because [of] my daughter's illness and they are telling me it's not good enough, and no matter how much I pay, they are going to shut off my hydro. I was told to get an electrician to come in and see if anything was wrong, so I did; \$150 an hour I had to pay for that, and he told me nothing was wrong. He tried to contact Hydro; they wanted nothing to do with him! I have shut my electric furnace off because I thought that's what the problem was, but it doesn't make a difference either. This has started since winter last year 2009 until now, April 9, 2010. I've been paying, and then on top of trying to pay it they added another \$875 to the bill for a security deposit because of failure to keep up a good payment history! I'm trying; that's all I can say, and I can't afford to have my hydro shut off. I've explained to Hydro that I'm trying to pay what I can in a month. They just don't want to hear it from me anymore. So [I] would like or need your help on this matter, please."

I think that demonstrates the situation of many people. I know that in the district of Muskoka the applications for emergency help have gone up significantly. This is before we get the 10% increase, then the 8% for GST and then, in years to come, the significant increases that are going to happen with the Green Energy Act. I would like to briefly just talk about those because—and this is not just me. You look at an article on the weekend from Shawn McCarthy, global energy reporter, and he talks about what's going on with the province's green energy plans. The title of it: "Ontario's Clean Energy Plan Called Threat to Industry's Edge."

"Critics such as former provincial power executive Jan Carr say the government is recklessly pursuing politically popular, environmentally friendly policies that will undermine the power system's reliability and affordability."

"The recent rush to "green" Ontario's electricity system has produced a largely ad hoc approach to the selection and investment in power generation technologies that will unnecessarily increase the cost of electricity with far-reaching economic and social effects," Dr. Carr wrote in this month's edition of the *Journal of Policy Engagement*.

"Bruce Sharp, an analyst with Aegent Energy Advisors in Toronto, calculates the average residential power bill will climb by \$330 a year—about 25%—within a few years, including the addition of the harmonized sales tax."

On the same weekend, Margaret Wente wrote an article, "The Wacky World of Green Power." Starting in the middle of the article, it reads:

"Don't bet your solar panel on it. Renewables simply can't produce the large volumes of reliable energy that our economy needs. 'These energy sources are so intermittent and unreliable that you have to have backup power at all times,' says Professor Trebilcock. For every wind farm we build, we'll have to have a coal or gas-fired power station waiting in the wings to take over



when it's 20 below. 'I think we'll get next to nothing on carbon dioxide abatement,' he says.

1710

"Mr. Monbiot agrees. Germany, he says, has spent €1.2 billion on solar roofs. Their total contribution to the country's electricity supply was 0.4%. Their total contribution to carbon savings is zero.

"But what about green jobs? The McGuinty government confidently predicts that its green scheme will create 50,000 of them. Don't believe it. Some will be temporary construction jobs. Some other jobs will disappear because higher electricity costs will make Ontario less competitive. And many of the new jobs will be extremely costly to create....

"So who are the winners? The companies that harvest the subsidies. They're flocking to Ontario like fruit flies to a bowl of overripe peaches. The government is trying to create a feel-good story by showcasing the little guys—such as schools that want to install solar roofs, and native-run wind companies with names such as Mother Earth (despite the fact that little guys are the most inefficient operators of all). But it's the big guys who are the biggest winners—multinational corporations such as the Korean giant Samsung....

"The world is littered with cautionary tales about subsidized renewables and overblown promises. Spain went wild on solar, and set off a speculative boom. Inefficient, poorly designed plants popped up everywhere. The lavish subsidies inflated costs. When Spain plunged into recession, the subsidies were ratcheted back, and the industry collapsed."

Those are just some cautionary tales about what this government is getting into.

In the budget bill, they have an industrial rebate for northern Ontario. Well, that coalition I met with this afternoon that's concerned about the Xstrata smelter said it's too little, too late. It's a 25% reduction. Well, the cost saving in Quebec, where the ore is going to be shipped to be smeltered, is 50%, and the smelter is going to close. And just about every mill is already closed.

I would say, as with so many things that this government does, that the way they execute it is so full of holes and problems. They're always trying to pick winners and losers. I say to the members opposite, what about those people in the forestry sector? It's great for the forestry businesses that happen to be above the arbitrary boundary in the north, but what about Kimberly-Clark in Huntsville that's in the same business, that's producing toilet tissue and is a big consumer of electricity? What about Tembec in Huntsville? What about Panolam in Huntsville, which is in fibreboard? Now, all of a sudden, their competitors have a 25% advantage.

What about smaller companies? I received an email from Little John Enterprises in Timmins:

"LJE has been an entrepreneur in northeastern Ontario since 1983 and as such have been consuming hydro like all other businesses. At this time I am questioning why we are not entitled to receive the 25% rebate offered to larger companies. Why are we being discriminated against because we are a smaller company?

"I would appreciate a response ASAP."

This is another email from Little John Enterprises:

"Apparently to qualify for the 25% rebate, you must consume five megawatts of electricity. Our mill consumes one megawatt.

"There are hardly any large companies left in the wood industry in this northern district. What a time to give a rebate!

"We at Little John Enterprises pay taxes and royalties same as the larger companies. We've employed workers for 20 years-plus. Our mill produces up to 100 different added-value products and has been doing this for over 20 years. Manufacturing value-added products are encouraged by the government aren't they?

"The government loaned us \$1 million to modernize and keep our industry working. Why are we being discriminated against by not allowing us to benefit from the 25% rebate?

"Hydro is one of our largest expenses and is going to become even more costly in the near future. It is little wonder that the forest industry as well as mining is packing up and leaving our province and country with little encouragement.

"As far as the provincial government is concerned, the north does not exist!!!"

That's from John Kapel of Little John Enterprises.

I've had inquiries—I won't name the business—from a company in my riding concerned about whether they will be able to participate in this industrial energy policy. After making several inquiries, they were told that the eligibility criteria for this program has not been established. Once again, this government seems to be making announcements, but they haven't necessarily figured it all out yet.

I was up in Parry Sound last week and I stopped in at Orr's Meats to buy some fine-quality sausages from Murray Orr, and other things, but what did he want to talk about? He wanted to talk about smart meters and the time-of-use metering. He's really concerned. He said to me, "I can't shut my fridges off. I can't have them run just in the middle of the night. They've got to run all day." He had estimated, this small butcher shop, fine-quality Orr's Meats in Parry Sound—I highly recommend you stop in there if you're going through; very good items. The porkettes they have are delicious. Getting back to the issue, though, seriously, his concern was that he estimates the cost for his energy bill could go up by as much as \$800 a month, and he's quite concerned about what that will mean for his business. So there's real concern out there.

Schedule 6 is the Electronic Land Registration Services Act. That makes provision for entering into agreements with service providers. It also creates a commissioner of electronic land registration services. It gives the commissioner the power to investigate disputes. No doubt this is in part to deal with all the omissions which have resulted from the electronic registration process, such as the failure to convey road allowances and rights of way, which has had the effect of landlocking property



owners. I know the member from Durham has raised this issue in the past. He will probably want to speak about it. Currently, these property owners have had to pay out of their own pockets to have their problems corrected, despite the fact that it was the government that created them.

There are various other schedules to amend the Law Society Act, the Health Care Consent Act, the City of Ottawa Act, the Mental Health Act.

But criticism about the budget is not confined to the PC caucus. Adam Radwanski of the Globe and Mail, on March 25, 2010, said, "With this budget, Ontario is banking on the near-impossible." The Cross-Border Biotech Blog of March 25 said, "Ontario's 2010 budget contains no new innovation-related initiatives, leaving the province to fall further behind competitive jurisdictions." Toronto Board of Trade president Carol Wilding says, "This is not a good day for regional transit," as the budget slashes billions of dollars in new transit construction.

Tourism: I know the member for Wellington-Halton Hills, I think it is—I'm getting his riding mixed up—Mr. Arnott, is the tourism critic, and he noted that there was no mention of tourism in the budget. Now, there is a tourism tax. Interestingly, despite the HST being created, the retail sales tax does stay around, so we're still going to need tax collectors and the bureaucracy because there's going to be a 3% retail sales tax on transient accommodations. There's also going to be, and most people probably don't realize this, a new 13% retail sales tax on used cars. I bet most people are not aware of that. So the bureaucracy will still be around to collect this new 13% retail sales tax on used cars. That means there's still going to be this bureaucracy; there's still going to be a need for tax collectors in the province of Ontario.

Jeffrey Simpson of the Globe and Mail, on March 24, said, "Ontario's budget will just delay the pain: The province is in an immense fiscal hole with absolutely no idea how to climb out of it." I would agree with that, Mr. Speaker. They have this never, never plan to go some eight years before they might balance the budget. Hopefully, there will be a new government in place before then that will actually get serious about restraining spending, because I think this government could be elected for 100 years—

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Norm Miller:** They could be elected for 100 years, and they'll never balance another budget. Never. I just don't believe it.

Mr. Speaker, I'm starting to run out of time.

Schedule 23 is an interesting one because it finances new borrowing. Because of all the money they're spending, schedule 23 allows up to \$31.7 billion in new borrowing—new borrowing—apart from debt maturity. So that's what we've got to look forward to. As has been pointed out, the government is spending some \$2.8 million an hour more than they're creating.

1720

There's a schedule 28—sorry. I think it's schedule 31 or 28; I've got my schedules mixed up there. One has to

do with the tobacco tax; the other has to do with cigarettes. However, the government is not dealing with the 50% of illegal cigarettes that are sold in the province in any sort of convincing way. We're almost at the fourth anniversary of Caledonia. I received a letter from a constituent this week who had been charged with buying illegal cigarettes at Caledonia. They bought illegal cigarettes, and the email to me, with a series of questions which I forwarded on to the government, asked, "How come it's okay for me to buy these cigarettes? Why is the government not going after the people who are selling them? When they know where they are selling them and they can see they are selling them, why doesn't the government deal with them?" The constituent is writing me, saying, "I didn't know it was illegal to buy these cigarettes." So that is certainly a valid concern.

Tim Hudak and the opposition have put forward some significant ideas to try to get the economy going again, to try to create those very important private sector jobs that we need in the economy. So I'd ask listeners to go to 10for2010.ca to have a look at some of the ideas, like the plan to restore balance to WSIB. As I mentioned, the unfunded liability has gone up 50%. We're out of whack with the other provinces. We have the highest premiums and costs on business. That's hurting jobs.

We have a plan to eliminate job-killing red tape, to suspend the tax on new jobs, to make home ownership more affordable, and to expand job opportunities for young people through apprenticeship. Because of this government's cozy relationship with unions, they won't do the simple thing and bring in a one-to-one apprenticeship ratio, which they could, at the snap of a finger, very easily do. They have not done that. When you talk to some of the local electricians, that's something they'd really like to see.

We'd like to see them create jobs in northern Ontario. They've got their Bill 191, the Far North Act, which is going to shut down all development in northern Ontario.

We'd like to see them cut wasteful government spending. They're good at spending money. We'd like to see a mandatory sunset review of all the ministry agencies, boards and commissions.

We'd like to see them stop picking winners and losers and end corporate welfare.

I can't get through all 10 points because I'm at the end of my opportunity to speak, but it's been my pleasure to make some comments on the budget bill, Bill 16, today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It is always a pleasure to listen to the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka when he waxes so eloquently on all economic matters.

He spoke about so many issues, but time only permits me to talk about one of them. He talked about the failure of this government in terms of its HST policy and the amounts of money that it gave to the auditors. He very correctly points out that it was the government's decision to give that money. The government, in turn, of course, correctly points out that it was the Conservatives who



signed that initial contract all those many years ago. And so here we are caught in this conundrum about who is to blame.

But I do have to agree with my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka: Although the Conservatives did negotiate this contract in the first place, it has been renewed many times, most recently by this government on two or three occasions in the last six years. The government knew full well, when it decided to go along the HST path, of the cost of its actions. The government knew when it signed the accord in secret with the government in Ottawa, the Harper government in Ottawa, that the auditors were going to be transferred. They knew that it was going to cost them money to get out of the contractual agreement, and they knew that that cost was going to be \$25 million. But they went ahead with the HST anyway.

I think that's the point that needs to be underlined: They went ahead with the HST. It was simply a cost of doing business, and the cost for the government was to pay the auditors, whether they thought it was a good thing or a bad thing. They were transferring those jobs from Ontario to the federal government, and they had no choice but to pay. They hid that fact from everyone until the time of the budget. When it broke at the time of the budget, of course, many people were upset, not only those who don't believe the HST is good financial or fiscal policy, but also those who felt that this was a form of double-dipping.

I commend my friend for bringing it up, but I think the full facts need to be revealed.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the comments that were made by the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and the member from Beaches–East York.

Our Open Ontario plan will create new opportunities for jobs and economic growth. The 2010 budget moves that plan forward and protects the progress Ontarians have made in our schools and hospitals as we eliminate the deficit caused by global recession.

The deficit which the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka spoke about is very easy to explain. We made a commitment to invest in infrastructure of \$16 billion. The tax revenue in this province is down. We also invested in the auto sector to keep it here.

He talked about spending being up. It costs a lot of money to repair the damage that was done from 1995 to 2003 in this province. We had hospital cuts—huge cuts in hospitals. I remember going to visit my wife in the hospital at the Oshawa General Hospital. I pressed the wrong button and ended up, I think, on the fifth or sixth floor. The doors opened. All the beds were in the hallways and all the mattresses were rolled up, and that was the efficiencies that that hospital was able to find.

We had education cuts. It was identified through the Rozanski commission at the time—cuts of over \$1 bil-

lion. They cut inspectors. They talk about efficiencies: "We're going to cut red tape." What we got through inspector cuts was Walkerton.

I think we got a very clear message from the member who spoke about tearing up contracts. He said the government should just walk in, tear them up, throw them out.

Our budget proposal is talking about hope, giving people hope in this province. We're going to create more college spaces. We're going to invest in Second Career spaces as well. There's a lot of things that we're talking about—giving people in this province hope.

But what the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka gave us was a reminder that the PC Party hopes that Ontario has forgotten the damage they did.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I certainly listened intensely to our critic, the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. Mr. Miller gave a very thorough review of this budget, and he has every reason to have needed more time. In fact, I think he should have sought more time to make the points.

He commented primarily on two sections that are most troubling in the general sense. One is the stealthful way that they've eliminated the review of the LHINs, the local health integration networks, this health bureaucracy that's taking hundreds of millions of dollars away from patient care, away from the bedside and into the boardroom. It's just unacceptable the way it was done, and I think it undermines the whole process of why we're here today. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has brought this up in question period, only to be shuffled off.

The other part that's the most troubling, I think, looking forward, is section 22. That's another stealthful way within the budget to be dealing with the pharmacists of Ontario. I read with much disdain—and Mr. Miller's point was very well taken, reading some of the commentaries that all members are receiving. The letter and the tone of the letter from the minister to the OPA was quite unacceptable, criticizing a highly regarded profession in each of our ridings. I think he's done a very admirable job of bringing that up.

I just want to put this on the record. This is from one of my constituents. He said, "First of all, I would like to say that pension income splitting is a great benefit." He thanks the federal government and gives them much credit. He says, "However, the Ontario Liberal government's budget appears to be slightly less generous...." He goes on to explain that if you file with income splitting, you end up paying more tax provincially through the health tax. The health premium tax is applied to both persons, so you actually increase the amount you spend provincially. Also—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The tax credit is also not—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Questions and comments?



**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'm very pleased to join the debate. I always enjoy listening to the member from Parry Sound.

I've been here for 15 budgets, both put forward by the Harris government and by our own government. Quite frankly, this is one budget on which I've had less response from the general public than any other budget, and I think the reason for that is that people basically believe the direction that we're going in. They basically think it's right in tough economic times to do something with respect to salary levels, that we freeze salary levels once contracts are over and done with in a couple of years etc. They basically agree with the approach that we're taking.

1730

Now, let me just very quickly deal with the whole drug situation. The reality is this: We in the province of Ontario—whether the government buys generic drugs or the average person—pay, in some cases, three, four or five times more than the same generic drug sells for in other jurisdictions. One of the reasons for that is the fact of the so-called “professional allowances” that are then being paid back by the generic drug companies to the drug stores. That's what this is all about. Is it going to hurt the bottom line of the drug stores? You're darned right. Once we've got those professional allowances out, they can no longer count on it. But it simply isn't right. You and I know that these so-called “professional allowances” in some other professions are called something totally different. The reality is that we want to utilize that \$500 million that in effect is being paid back—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** —that in effect is being paid back to the drug stores for other purposes, when it comes to health care. The reality is that we should not be paying any more for generic drugs here in the province of Ontario than any of the other jurisdictions in North America, and this bill does that job.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Now, are we all ready to hear the response?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond, and I thank the members from Beaches–East York, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Durham, and Kingston and the Islands for their comments.

The member from Beaches–East York talked about the fact that the HST collectors will still receive severance. I think he correctly pointed out that the contract has been renewed many times. The government knew they were going to be making this HST agreement, although I don't recall much being said about the HST in the past election campaign. But they did know about this, and yet they didn't change the structure of that agreement; BC did, so they aren't paying out the \$45,000 per tax collector who is not losing their job. As I've pointed out, we do have an amendment ready to go, and we will be putting that amendment forward at committee when this bill has done second reading and goes to committee. We

have an amendment that those tax collectors are not deemed to have lost their jobs, so they shouldn't receive severance, because they haven't lost their jobs.

The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock talks about the Open Ontario plan. We've seen a lot of plans from this government. There's the five-point plan that was talked about. We have a five-year plan. He talked about the past government, the PC government. Well, one of the things I think was a pretty good accomplishment of that government was the over one million jobs that were created from 1995 to 2003.

This government is digging a bigger hole, a deeper hole, than Bob Rae did. Some of the spending restraints that Mike Harris had to bring into effect were because of that deep hole that Bob Rae dug. The McGuinty government is digging an even bigger hole, which is going to require some spending restraint, which this government so far has been very much unwilling to do.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The first thing I would like to do is hold down the lead. Our critic is not available. I'm seeking unanimous consent to do so.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Prue has asked that the leadoff speech of the third party be stepped down. Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** So now you have to hear me for only 20 minutes. In the 20 minutes, there are three areas of this budget that I want to talk about, three areas in which I think it is absolutely essential that the people of Ontario understand what is going to happen to them as a result of the budget, if and when this budget is passed.

The first area that I want to talk about is hospitals and the hospital base funding, because this is going to have a huge implication upon all of those hospitals across Ontario, all of those people who rely on medical services, and will literally force many of the hospitals across this province to provide different kinds of care. Whether you are in Wawa, Toronto, Thunder Bay or Kingston, things are going to change, because the hospital base funding has been set at 1.5%. We know from the hospital administrators—we know from all of them—that hospital costs in the next year are going to go up somewhere between 3% and 4%. They cannot help it. It is based in part on some of the negotiations and the contracts, some of the medical supplies, some of the costs of energy and other things. The rate of inflation for hospitals tends to be higher than the normal rate of inflation, which is anticipated at being around 2%. So there is going to have to be a change to those hospitals. We know it. They know it. The government knows it. The government, which is setting it at 1.5%, knows that things are going to change in the hospitals. And what is going to change?

I've spoken about this before. Things are going to change, such as in my own local hospital, Toronto East General. I have spoken at length several times with Mr. Rob Devitt, who in my view is an excellent CEO. He tries his very best to run that hospital to the community standard that we have come to expect, but he has told me



quite bluntly, and told the community quite bluntly, that he cannot operate the hospital and the same programs that he has done in the past. The first thing the hospital administrators did, and they were forced to do, and I think they did so with some great reluctance, was shut down the physiotherapy unit. They have shut it down because it is not within the total mandate of the hospital. They considered that it was something that could be taken out and could be provided privately in other locations, although the majority of patients who use the physiotherapy unit have no such coverage to purchase that independently and privately themselves. They're doing so with considerable community angst. The community is not happy about this. They know that the loss of this vital service to our hospital is going to hurt.

The second thing is another community hospital just north of me that a lot of people in the East York area use, and that veterans use, Sunnybrook hospital, and we have had letters from people at Sunnybrook hospital outlining that there aren't the number of beds and services available that there were before and that they've had to make cutbacks to the point that they've had to close some of the rooms. But they still have sick people, and those sick people are being put out in the halls and being forced to sleep in the halls. The nurses do not like the fact that people sleep there all night for days on end. They have to be toiletied there. There is very little privacy. It is not the kind of care that nurses and doctors in that hospital are accustomed to giving. They want to give so much more, but there isn't the budget to do it anymore.

Another symptom in a letter that was sent to me just this past week—it was sent by a woman who has asked that I not use her name, so I won't, but she outlines that Toronto East General Hospital has made some further cuts that are going to be very detrimental to public health and to the community. Toronto East General Hospital has been a teaching hospital for a long time. When I was the mayor of East York, and before that when I was a councillor, I served on the board of health with Sheela Basrur, who we all remember with some great fondness. We had Toronto East General Hospital in our community designated as a teaching hospital. People came from all over the world, and particularly all over Canada, to study at that hospital. It was a model. But more than that, the hospital allowed the community to have access. There are lecture theatres. There are community rooms. There are rooms and classrooms. There are places where community groups can get together and talk about medicine and health and health promotion. I have attended on behalf of some of those groups, some of the meetings of the schizophrenia society of east Toronto. I have talked to diabetes groups who hold their meetings there, lots of groups like that.

They have all been given notice. They have all been given notice that they can no longer use those facilities free of charge to promote public health in the Beaches—East York area, that from this point on they're either going to have to find another location or pay the hospital hundreds of dollars to hold their meetings to promote

public health and public health awareness issues. This is what the hospital's having to do. They're having to shut down a community. I can't believe that this government wants this to happen. But it is happening. It's happening right before your very eyes. You're doing that by limiting the hospitals to 1.5% of base funding and forcing them to make decision that I know and you know they don't want to make, and that I know and you know the community is upset about.

1740

But here it is; it's part of the budget. This is what you're going to ask me to vote for, and if I don't vote for it, you're going to taunt me forever with, "You didn't vote for this provision of the budget to give the hospitals money." Well, I don't think it's enough. I think that when the community starts to suffer on something they expect very strongly from this government, from this institution—they rely upon the government of Ontario for many things, but primarily and fundamentally, one of the things they rely upon is the provision of adequate funds for hospital services.

The second thing I want to talk about is the whole provision of poverty, because this was much in the last budget, but not so much in this one. In 2003, the Premier stood in his place and ran a good and successful campaign for the Liberal Party, talking about poverty issues and that he wanted to do something about the horrendous level of poverty in Ontario. In 2007, he ran another campaign in which he said he wanted to be known as the poverty Premier. He promised in the 2007 budget process and the throne speech that he was going to do a lot of things to help the poor.

But what do we see in this budget? We see some of the cruellest, meanest, most horrible things being perpetrated by any government in the history of this province. I say that, remembering full well the meanness of Mike Harris around this issue. I say that, full well knowing that they cut back welfare payments by 21%. I know that. But what this government is doing is almost identical and even more hurtful than what the Conservatives did.

The first thing this government has done in this budget is that they've stood up and proudly announced that everybody's going to get a 1% increase—1%. But if you look at the small print, they're not going to get the money now. They're not going to get that huge 1%, which amounts to \$6 if you're a single person, or \$10 if you're a family, or \$10 if you're on ODSP. You're not going to get that now. It is in November, if you're on ODSP, that you're going to get the 1%, and only in November. If you had the unmitigated gall to be on Ontario Works, because you're not quite as good, you have to wait until December to get the 1%.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** A month later?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** A month later. So for six months, there's no increase, although they talk about that. And we know, and you know, and everybody out there knows that inflation is going to eat all of that before they get it—every cent.



Over the years, this government stands in their place, and every time I ask the minister questions, she always trots out the same thing: "This government, since 2003, has given an 11% increase." Inflation has been 14%. The people who are on welfare and ODSP are worse off today than they were in the deepest, darkest days of Mike Harris, and this government pretends to be proud of it. I think that is a disgrace.

But not to be outdone, you've got the special diet allowance. This government really wants to stick it to the poor. They really want to stick it to the poor.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** No, no. Just wait until I start reading what your government is doing, because you have no idea what's going on down there at the Human Rights Commission.

They have done away with the special diet, and they are replacing it with a nutritional supplement program. They didn't wait for the end of the month for their expert panel, for Gail Nyberg et al to come forward and say what needs to be done. When Gail Nyberg wrote to the government—and she's a very nice Liberal woman; she lives in my riding; I've known her for years; capable, competent—she begged you not to do this. But you didn't wait for her report; you went ahead and did it anyway. You didn't do anything about asset stripping, which they've talked about. You haven't done anything about the social assistance rules.

What you did do is you went to the Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission ordered, on February 17, that this government pay people the special diet allowance that they deserved.

This government has gone way out of its way to try to reverse that decision. They will not obey the Human Rights Commission of Ontario. In fact, yesterday they filed a report. They filed an application before the Human Rights Commission in which they are asking that nothing be done to pay people the money that they are owed until the government can, in fact, change the law and make sure that they become ineligible.

I'd like to quote what the assistant deputy minister had to say, because they rely on his affidavit—the assistant deputy minister, and I'm looking for his name. I have it on the second document; if I can't locate the first one, it is on the second one. Anyway, I'll get the assistant deputy's name in a—oh, there it is: It's David Carter-Whitney, assistant deputy minister of the social policy development division of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, a position he has held since September 2007.

He makes the following statement in support of the government's action. I quote it starting on paragraph 7: "Unlike the SDA, which provides assistance"—that's the special diet allowance—"to social assistance recipients with a variety of medical conditions, the new program that was announced by the government would be medically based and would help individuals with severe medical needs that are on social assistance. Therefore, not all current SDA recipients will be eligible for the new program. As a result, the government indicated its

intention to provide a transition period between the elimination of the SDA and the implementation of a NSP."

He's being very forthright, very honest about what you're doing. You are cutting off all of those people who have a special diet allowance in favour of some people who have severe medical needs who are going to get a new program.

He goes on in paragraph 10: "Notification to recipients

"The government wishes to provide the over 162,000 current SDA recipients with written notification of the date on which their payments will cease in order to help them prepare for an adjustment in their monthly social assistance."

Think about that: 162,000 people are going to get a letter saying that they're being cut off so that they can prepare themselves to get \$10, \$20, \$50 or \$200 less a month on which to live. That's what this government is doing. That's what you're doing in courts. That's what you're doing before the Human Rights Commission.

In paragraph 11, he writes, "In order to eliminate the SDA, amendments are required to both a minister's regulation and a Lieutenant Governor in Council regulation. Amendments to the latter are subject to the government approval process," which means that the cabinet is going to have approve it.

Of course, all the members of the Liberal caucus who are not in cabinet are going to cheer madly and clap when the minister stands up and makes this announcement.

He goes on to write in paragraph 12, "The LRC"—the Lieutenant Governor—"is scheduled to meet for business twice a month until the end of June 2010; and

"Committee and cabinet approval and signature by the Lieutenant Governor in Council" will be given by that time.

In paragraph 14, he writes, "I have been informed by the director, social assistance and municipal operations branch and believe that it will take 6 to 8 months to implement all the changes to the SDMT that are required to discontinue recipients' SDA payments, including:

"—4 months to implement the program data fix that will stop all current SDA payments;

"—6 to 8 months to program and implement the required changes that will prevent the system from creating future SDA payments.... This activity will include the planning, designing, and implementation of required coding changes" etc.

Then he goes on over many pages to describe how exactly the government intends to do this.

So if the backbenchers over there think you're not doing it, you're doing it. If you think that there's some kind of program and that you're going to help these poor people, you're not. It is the intention of the minister and the intention of the cabinet to cut them all off and to allow a certain limited few with severe medical problems back on. That means people are going to lose up to and including 20% of their payments that they get on ODSP. These are the poorest and sickest people we have in our province, and you are sticking it to them in this budget. They are being stuck to in a way that I find reprehensible and immoral. I even remember that back in those days—



and I am no fan of Mike Harris, as you obviously know—he didn't even cut off that special allowance, but you're doing it.

1750

The next thing I'd like to talk about in the few minutes that are left is the deficit. It's not common that New Democrats talk about that kind of thing, but I think it's important. The deficit is continuing at a record pace. The government admits that it's going to be \$21.3 billion of deficit in this fiscal year, and in spite of all of that there is going to be a continued lack of tax dollars. That's because this government in this budget and in all of the announcements leading up to the budget has agreed to continue \$2.4 billion in corporate tax cuts, money they could use to pay down the deficit or fund social programs, or give money to poor people who rely on social assistance and those who rely on diet supplements so they don't get sick. But they are also losing, according to the government's own figures, some \$4.5 billion as the result of the institution of the HST.

I know that a lot of people out there would find that very hard to believe. I have heard many times in here that the HST is a tax grab, which it is, but it is not a tax grab that is going to make the government any money, and that's something that is not often talked about here. It is not making this government money. It is simply—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I agree with the minister over there. You will actually lose money as a result because you're giving away the money to a lot of places, including the corporations that don't need it. And in the end, it's going to cost the government money. The \$4.5 billion that they lose on that, the \$2.4 billion they're giving away to corporations, amounts to nearly \$7 billion, which I don't think this government can afford to give away, but they're giving it away anyway.

They've talked about the seven years of elimination until the time of the elimination of this debt. This is laughable. This is totally laughable because when you look at the long-term plan, how they're going to do that, it counts on a 3.4% growth plan for each and every one of the next seven years.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Unheard of.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Three point four per cent is unheard of, and it's also nearly impossible. This does not happen in Canada all the time; 3.4% is an excellent growth year. It is a rare growth year. It is one that is not often met. But this government, in order to eliminate the deficit, is looking at seven consecutive years of growth rates of 3.4% or more.

They are also stating at the same time that they are going to increase expenses by only 2.3% a year, but this includes all of the interest that they are paying on past debts. It is literally impossible to limit growth like that, unless you're going to start affecting programs.

Then, of course, you come down to the end, and that is that they're going to cut those programs. But this is a smart government. They're not going to do it in this budget cycle and they're not going to do it next year, either. The cuts to the programs come in the years 2012

and 2013, which is coincidentally a few months after the next election. Oh, wow. That's when the cuts are going to come. That's when everybody's going to come back here, and if the Liberals find themselves still on that side, that's when the cuts are going to come. That's the big plan. This is a budget that is so full of holes that some people would call it a Swiss cheese budget. With that, I'll sit down.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** We first heard the member's honourable party carp about how cruel we were because we were going to lose 8,000 daycare spaces. The sanctimony was dripping. Now, we've reversed the Harper cuts and we're introducing day-long education. I would love the member to come down to Regent Park, where I was just elected with a majority of the votes there, and talk to people there about the child tax credit, about the \$1-billion housing rebuild, about Pathways to Education, which has reversed the dropout rate from 66%. The real cruelty under the Harris Tories: They removed the bus fares, they took the bus money from kids and the dropout rate went from 10% to 66%. It's back down to 10%.

We are not cutting back. This is the big difference between the Liberals and the NDP. While we share some values, we understand you have to create wealth before you can redistribute it, which is why the NDP have been one-term wonders in most provinces, unless they become Liberals, like they have in Manitoba and Nova Scotia, where they like the HST.

You should read Cy Gonick's analysis of the NDP's record on the equivalent of ODSP, because you talk a great story in opposition but you never deliver when you're in government—like we do, quite frankly.

GDP growth is better in Ontario than in any other state or province on the continent. And if you don't think that is a result of this government's policies, then you don't get it.

Fifty thousand jobs: People in my community who voted for me two months ago don't want more social assistance, they want a job. They like Samsung. They voted against your party because of Samsung. They want 16,000 jobs. They don't want left-wing rhetoric. They don't want more subsidies—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The previous speaker thinks that loud makes it right.

But anyway, I think the member from Beaches–East York brought some very caring commentary to the budget, which is a very conflicting issue.

I would say that the part that really troubles me most is the portion to do with the pharmaceutical changes, I think in schedule 22. There are really two sections that are troublesome. In fairness, in his rebuttal, I'd like to hear what he says, because this discussion here in schedule 22 is quite troublesome.

I would only say—I've got a couple of examples that were brought to my attention by one of my local



pharmacists today. This is what's happening as a result of this budget bill.

A generic drug today, a heart drug, is in very high demand and is also a very important drug, treating heart disease. Digoxin, a generic drug, is currently 38 cents. That's what it costs today. But it's being discontinued as a result of this change for the patent drug, which is a drug called toloxin, and that will be dispensed at \$60 a tablet. This change is going to be shifting the cost to our constituents, our seniors, people like myself, who are seniors. That's one example. I have a list here as well.

The real issue here is that they're not dealing with the patent drugs. There's a list that was just released today of the patent drugs; they're all going up in price. This is a schedule. All of the patent drugs are going up in price. They're dealing with the smallest part of it and blaming the pharmacists.

I would think that some of the people—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** This Bill 16 is a budget bill. Listening to the member from the opposite side from the NDP, from Beaches–East York, I'm telling you, he keeps saying that government is spending too much, and at the end, he ends up saying that we're not spending enough.

When he referred to the hospitals here in Toronto and the 1.5% increase in their funding, that 1.5%—I hope it's not going to go to the CEO, because right now we know how much those people are making.

I've got to tell you that the McGuinty government saw what was coming, way back in 2008. When we spoke about the infrastructure program that we decided to implement in 2009, we said that we would spend \$32.5 billion on the infrastructure program.

I was in Montreal way back in October 2008. There was a seminar of all economists from all over the world. They were saying at that point, "We have to be ready to face this crisis coming, the recession." We were the only ones present at that meeting who had forecast the future of Ontario or the rest of the provinces.

Today, they're criticizing us for the HST. The HST right now has had 13 info sessions in my area, and I can tell you that people keep telling me, "Now we've finally got the truth." We've been hearing the opposition criticizing, but if they would tell the right story—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for York–Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** In the few moments that I have, I'd like to just put on the record a couple of comments with regard to this debate on the budget.

One of the things that one should always consider in the creation of a budget is, what's the impression that people are going to have in the short term and in the long term? When I look at this budget, I see the fact that there are some very serious implications for both the short and long term.

Ontarians across the province are quickly coming to realize the kind of imposition of higher taxes that this government is in the process of introducing. Certainly, in

my riding I have had hundreds of people talk to me about the HST come July 1 and the kinds of implications it will have, particularly on small businesses and seniors who have not got the opportunity to expect to have a further 8% in their own pockets.

The other thing that has come quickly to their attention is the question of the so-called smart meters. The question of a meter that deprives them of the ability to make best use—because they're not going to do it in the middle of the night, because they are going to have higher costs during the peak times, which is going to impact their daily lives.

Most of all, there's the long term. In 2003, this government had a debt of \$147 billion. Today it's \$289 billion. That's the legacy the Premier is going to have to carry as time passes. That's the legacy for all Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Beaches–East York has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to what my colleagues from Toronto Centre, Durham, Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and York–Simcoe had to say. Given that I've got one minute and 50 seconds, I'm going to concentrate mostly on the member from Toronto Centre, because he intrigues me with what he has to say. His knowledge of the history of politics in this country is legendarily bad. That is because, as he should know, NDP governments have been re-elected again and again and again, time after time, in Saskatchewan and in—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Manitoba.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Manitoba and in British Columbia and, I dare say, will be in Nova Scotia come the next—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** When he wants to attack what I have to say, he doesn't attack what I have to say or the facts of what his government is doing; he tries to make other things up. He's very good at making things up. I've known him for years. I've known him for years when he made things up in Winnipeg, and I've known him for years now that he's making them up in Toronto Centre.

I'm a boy from Regent Park. If anyone knows what Regent Park needs, it's me, not you. In spite of the fact that you may claim to represent them, you're a bit of an interloper. That's the reality: You showed up, you got elected, and you pretend to know them. Those are poor people who rely on so many things. Those who can work want to work. Those who can't work and are on ODSP for health reasons need decent money to live. They need a good, decent place to live. They need an opportunity not to get sick. You cannot, as a government, cut them off special diet without expecting that your citizens, those people you represent, are going to end up in the hospital. That is what your government is doing, and that is what you should be ashamed of.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** My trusty pocket watch tells me it's after 6 of the clock. This House is adjourned until 9 of the clock Thursday morning, April 15.

*The House adjourned at 1805.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Granum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
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<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
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Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
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Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh  
Mike Colle, Christine Elliott  
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi  
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi  
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des comptes publics**

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Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman  
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przedziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

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Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

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Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

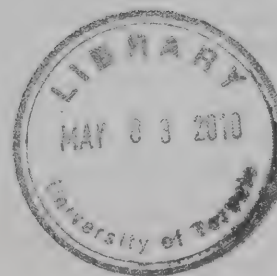
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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 15 April 2010

Jeudi 15 avril 2010



Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

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L'honorable Steve Peters

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 15 April 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 15 avril 2010

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Jewish prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 POSANT LES FONDATIONS DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA CROISSANCE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 14, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts / Projet de loi 16, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2010 et édictant ou modifiant diverses lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm delighted and honoured this morning to stand up and speak about the government's budget measures.

As you know, we introduced our budget quite some time ago as a result of many different things that happened in the province of Ontario, in our beautiful nation of Canada and around the globe. The economy for the last couple of years has been suffering from a lot of anxiety as a result of the collapse of the financial system in many different nations. Many banks went bankrupt, many companies closed, many factories closed and many businesses closed their doors as a result of the bad economy.

As a result of this economy, our government took extra measures to put in plans for the province of Ontario to make sure that the people of this province have a job, good health care and a good education system at the elementary, high school and post-secondary levels. Also, we made sure our infrastructure investment continued in the province of Ontario in order to stimulate our economy, maintain our prosperity and make sure that people can commute from one end to the other without any trouble.

I come from a city called London, Ontario. My city was hit hard by the collapse of financial institutions in the world. Many people from my riding of London-Fanshawe lost their jobs. Many companies closed. Many families were looking for a solution to feed their families, put food on their table and pay their bills and mortgages.

So we faced tough times in this province after many, many good years.

As you know, our government put in plans to absorb the results of this financial crisis. They put in plans to stimulate the economy; they put in plans to maintain our health care in the public domain; they put in a plan to maintain our public education system to be open for all the people in Ontario; and we also have a plan to open our universities and colleges to people from around the globe as a result of our Open Ontario for business and education.

I had the chance to visit Saudi Arabia not a long time ago. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, allow me to introduce my friend, who came from Saudi Arabia a couple of days ago, the president of the Canadian Dawah Association, Mr. Shazaad Mohammed. He was our guide when we were there.

We had the privilege and honour to visit many different institutions. By the way, I went with my colleague Dave Levac, the member from Brant. We had the privilege to meet government officials, we had the privilege to meet university presidents, we had the privilege to meet a chamber of commerce, many different stakeholders, many different people, many educators, and all of them told us they love Ontario. They love the education we have in this province, and all of them asked us how they can come and study in this province.

Over and over, they spoke to us about our green energy. They believe we're on the right track, that we're taking the right direction in order to protect our environment by creating initiatives, which we call the green energy system in the province of Ontario, to engage many different companies, factories, scientists and researchers from around the globe to come to this province and invest and tell us how we can change our habits, how we can produce energy in a green way, in a positive way, not harming our economy and not harming our environment.

We went to a university, and the first thing they asked us was, "How can we go and study in Canada? How can we attend universities and continue our research and innovation in Canada?" Therefore, our initiative is working; people around the globe have heard of our initiative, have heard of our Open Ontario plan. They've heard that our universities and colleges are open for all students from around the globe to come and study, because we can offer something nobody else can offer on this planet. We can offer the discipline; we can offer high education; we can offer many different things nobody else can do.

That's why we have to capitalize on this initiative. We have to open our colleges and universities. That's why in



this budget we have a plan to increase our capacity by 20,000 students this coming year and also increase our capacity in universities and colleges by 50% to allow students from outside to come and study here. I think it's a great direction, a great strategy to engage people from around the globe.

As you know, when people come from different nations to study here, they establish a good relationship with our community, with our culture, with our government and with our many different stakeholders. So when they go back to their countries, if they get a job in government or become ministers, governors or whatever, the first thing they think about is Ontario and Canada. It's the best and most important natural way to attract people to deal with this beautiful province. That's why we have the Open Ontario strategy for open education in our colleges and universities.

We know exactly that we cannot build a future without building on our education system, without investing in our youngsters in this province. That's why our government strongly came with a project—full-day learning. Full-day learning, hopefully, if the bill passes all the stages, will be opened in September. It would be about 35,000 students from across the province of Ontario in those classes. Almost 600 schools across this province will be open for students to come and study.

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Let me tell you, I had the privilege and honour to be on the committee where we discussed this bill for many days. Many stakeholders came. Some of them voiced their concerns, and they had a right to voice their concerns. I was happy and honoured to see the Minister of Education and the government listening to the concerns and adjusting the bill in a way to protect our child care spaces in the province of Ontario, our good partners in the province of Ontario who have worked with us for many years to provide support for many youth and children. Therefore, full-day learning will be a great answer for many families who cannot afford to go to work and leave their kids behind. This I think is the right step in the right direction.

Despite the tough economic times, our government took the right decisions and opened the schools for all the people in this province to study and to learn, because we know exactly that the most important thing, the most important time when you invest in the youth is when they are still young. You give them the chance and the strong base to grow up with and good education. I think the people of Ontario, in September, are going to see the positive results of this direction.

Despite our tough economic times, we didn't stop investing in our infrastructure. We heard for many years that our infrastructure was neglected, our infrastructure was not being paid attention to. We have crumbling roads, bridges and sewer systems that are very old and not handling the capacity of cities and towns. Many people cannot deal with commuting because of the narrow roads in many different jurisdictions. That's why our government, despite the economic situation, despite the finan-

cial difficulties, continued to invest in our bridges, our roads and our sewer systems, in order to update them to the level where we are strong and able to support and service the people of this great province.

In my riding of London—Fanshawe, as a result of this investment, many bridges will be reconstructed, many roads will be surfaced and widened, many recreation facilities will be supported, and many parks will be enlarged and expanded in order to absorb and look after many people who want to visit those parks. I think, as a result of the bad economy, we have started turning in a positive way. As a result of that, we have created many thousands of jobs for the people of Ontario, and I think it was a good way and a good method to stimulate our economy.

As a result of our investment in infrastructure, as a result of our continuation of investment in the education system and health care, we noticed the positive impact because our economy started coming back.

As a result of that, we heard that the GM Oshawa plant is going to rehire more than 600 people. As a result of that, CAMI in Ingersoll is going to rehire 700. Also, there was good news the other day about the Toyota plant in Woodstock. They might add another shift, which means about 800 good-paying jobs are coming back to our economy. Our economy is coming back due to our initiatives, due to our strategy.

I want to commend the Minister of Finance for his steps, for his directions and for his commitment to this economy and this province. Also, I commend our government, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, for seeing the future and a great vision for this province of Ontario.

As you know, we are one of the biggest provinces in this beautiful nation. Our responsibility and duty is to help others, our responsibility and duty is to attract more jobs to come to this province because, as you know, we are the engine of the economy of Canada. If our economy is strong, this country will be strong.

I had the privilege and honour to visit many different locations in the province of Ontario. I saw and heard many people commend our strategy, and commend our budget. I was asked, "How come the opposition party won't support you? How come the opposition party, in a difficult time, doesn't come with you as a government—forget about political divisions and political strategies and tactics, and come together in order to create a good economy for the people of Ontario?" Because in difficult times, people put politics aside and think about the people of Ontario. That's what we're doing here. I hope the opposition parties, the Conservatives and the NDP, come with us and join our hands and our efforts.

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** The member from the opposition is laughing.

It's important for all of us to work together, because working together is very important in showing leadership for the people of Ontario. Because you know what? I want to tell you, people don't care about party affiliations, they don't care who is in government, who is in



power, which party, many different things. They don't care. Do you know what they care about? They care about finding jobs. They care about their families. They care about the most important thing for them: to provide food for their families. That's why I believe that in difficult times, all of us should work together to create a good economy and a good direction for the people of Ontario. That is what we're working for on this side of the House.

When we try to pass this bill, when we finish the debate, hopefully all of us can take a chance to support this direction, because Open Ontario is our plan. It's a very important plan for the people of Ontario. It's an important plan for our economy. It's an important plan to maintain the health care system in the public domain. It's important for all of us to invest in our education, because education is the way of the future of this province. It's important for us to support our colleges and universities, to open the capacity, to increase the capacity, to welcome the students of this province and also to welcome students from around the globe. As I mentioned to you, it will be a good tool for us to tell about our prosperity and also to bring business back to us, to have a good time, a good connection with our province.

That's why I'm standing up today and speaking from experience about what I heard from many different people in the province of Ontario, in Canada, from around the globe. Because I know we take a lot of things for granted in this province. We think we have nothing to offer. As a matter of fact, who says that and thinks that way? It's wrong. They are wrong. We have a lot to offer. We are being looked at from many different directions around the globe. Everyone tells us, "You live in the most important and most beautiful province and the most advanced province in the world. How can we come to share this advance and knowledge and sources with you?" That's why this budget is talking about opening up this province for businesses to come to Ontario, to open in Ontario, to prosper in Ontario.

I also have a friend who has a good connection with a Chinese company. They are good in green energy. Do you know what they said? They want to come to Ontario. They want to open factories in Ontario because they think we are the most important province to open for business, because our businesses, our system—health care, education, infrastructure—all fit and make it easy for a company to come and open in this province. That's what we want. We want business. We want to work for the people of Ontario. We want people, when they wake up in the morning, to be able to go to work and come back to their family in good health and in good shape, in order to provide for themselves and their families. So our strategy is working.

I want to say again, our plan, if implemented fully, would be good for the people of Ontario, would be good for our economy, would be good for all of the people who want to come to Ontario.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** You sure let them spin you in your caucus meetings.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** The member from Welland—hopefully I can hear his plan. I know the opposition talks about many different things. They come up every single time and criticize us, but what's their plan? I don't know what their plan is; I have no idea. I didn't hear the plan yet.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** They've got a plan: Darrell Dexter's plan in Nova Scotia.

0920

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** See? I don't know anything about their plan. Instead, they stand up and criticize us. Show us your plan; I might change my mind. Maybe I'll support your plan. But I want to see a complete plan to serve the people of Ontario, serve our education, serve our health care, serve our infrastructure and create jobs for the province.

I was listening to CBC Radio this morning, and TV. Do you know what they said? Our economy is performing very well. We're not there yet, but we're on the way to having a good economy. I don't want to fool the people: We had a tough time. We're climbing back again to a good level, and we can offer people good service and good health care.

I think our government is taking initiatives. You heard about pharmacy issues lately, and I heard the opposition supporting the pharmacists against the people of Ontario. Supporting the people with a lower price of drugs is very good for everyone in this province. We're creating a measure to help people pay less for drugs. I think we should be commended. I want to take this opportunity to commend the Minister of Health for her great initiative and her great direction to maintain health care in the public domain by creating many different ways to save money for the people of Ontario, for the government of Ontario to be able to reinvest this money in health care: in cataract surgery and in knee and hip replacements, and also to lower the pressure in the ERs and allow people to be healthy again.

I think our government has taken the most important directions. We're not thinking about the political aspect of it, because we don't care about politics; we care about Ontario. We care about how we can help the province of Ontario. We care about how we can create jobs for the people of Ontario, how we can continue working with the people, how we can create a strong economy and provide for us collectively as a province and as a people, and how we can create jobs for those people who are looking to us, as elected officials, as saviours. That's why our initiatives, our budget bill, will make a lot of difference for the people of Ontario if it passes, because it means continuation of infrastructure, maintaining the education system and health care, and also opening Ontario for business, opening Ontario for education, opening Ontario for all people to come and learn and be prosperous with us in this province.

**Mr. Speaker,** I want to thank you for allowing me to stand up in this place and speak about our budget. I'm looking forward to hearing from the opposition. Hopefully we can work together.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. For a while there I felt like singing Kumbaya.

The honourable member for Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm glad to accept the invitation of the member from London–Fanshawe to respond to his remarks about his government's plan to open Ontario. Here is what the government is opening Ontario to. They are opening Ontario, this coming Canada Day, to a new 13% tax on everything that Ontario consumers will touch; that's what they are opening Ontario to. They're opening Ontario to what will be the highest energy prices in North America; the announcement will be made this week as we listen to the Ontario Energy Board give us those results. They're opening Ontario to one of probably the most difficult battles we've seen initiated by a minister of the crown: the battle that is raging now between the government and the pharmacists in this province. What they're opening Ontario to is the inability of pharmacists to keep their doors open, because unilaterally, with one announcement, with one piece of legislation, this government is carving out approximately \$300,000 of revenue from every pharmacy across the province of Ontario. That is what this government is opening Ontario up to.

And no, I and my colleagues will not follow the member and his government down that road. We refuse. We'll stand with the people of this province for good government, not the kind of policies that this member and his government are forcing on the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** In the interests of full disclosure, I should indicate at the outset that I like the member from London–Fanshawe. He's a most congenial person, and one is hard-pressed to say anything other than kind things about him. But we're not talking about him—in fact I just have, in the most complimentary way—we're talking about the regrettable failure of this government to understand that—yes, there's an economic recovery. The stock market, the TSE, is now over 12,000. Banks are reporting bigger and better profits, and their stock values have risen along with the other TSE 300 types. But it's a jobless recovery, because what happened is that Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals allowed this province to be gutted of its manufacturing jobs. Those are the wealth creation jobs. Not service sector jobs, not the hospitality sector—value-added manufacturing jobs. That's how you create wealth. You don't create wealth in a casino; you create wealth in manufacturing.

What's remarkable is that when the economy was tanking, when it was in free fall, this government wanted to accept no responsibility whatever: "Not our job. We have no control." It's like that observation that success has a thousand parents and failure is always an orphan. All of a sudden, Mr. McGuinty had no control over the free fall. He wants to take credit for the economic recovery, but he also doesn't want to acknowledge, first of all, that he can't take credit for it and, second, that it has nothing to do with creating jobs, because jobs aren't being created in this province. There are \$10.25-an-hour

jobs, but you don't send kids to college and university on minimum wage.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to rise in this House and participate in the discussion on the budget. At the outset I would like to congratulate Minister Dwight Duncan for bringing such a responsible budget to this House. The budget reflects the values of our party. It reflects the values of our government.

What is in the budget, as you can see, are investments in our education, investments in our early childhood education, full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, investments in our universities. We are going to create 20,000 new spots in our universities and colleges.

There are provisions for the establishment of a new online institute for learning, higher education, which is new in Ontario. This is going to open up higher education to every individual who is living in any part of Ontario. In his home, in her home, they can access the best education source, to increase their knowledge and education. Also, they can get a university degree.

That is the essence of this budget. The social services investments will be there, and education and childhood education as well. There are also other elements in this budget relating to the infrastructure investments. We are investing \$16.5 billion in our infrastructure. This is stimulating our economy, creating jobs and keeping jobs. This investment will create 300,000 jobs.

This is what we need at this time, when the world economy is in recession. We need to invest heavily in our economy in order to create jobs, and that's what this budget is going to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** We listened intently to the member from London–Fanshawe. As the member from Wexford said, he's a respectable commentary person and well informed in some respects, but in this case he's certainly not revealing everything that the people of Ontario should really know.

This budget is a failed budget. It still has a deficit of \$21.3 billion. I think the general theme in the media has been that we're going to pay more and get less; that's basically it.

We have the highest tuition in universities and post-secondary in Canada. That's only one example. According to the media reports this morning—and I could recite these, and will in the time I have next to speak—we have the highest electricity rates, which will make us less competitive, as the member from Newmarket–Aurora, Mr. Klees, said this morning.

0930

On July 1, we're going to implement the HST, which is going to net the province about another \$3.5 billion in tax revenue, and we must not forget the health tax that was levied on Ontario right after the 2003 election. That revenue, per year, from the taxpayers of Ontario, is about \$3.5 billion.



What they really have here is—all members here want to serve Ontario and provide all Ontarians, equally, the best possible services and level of services.

If you look at the sunshine list that was issued last week, there is a 63% increase in public sector servants receiving \$100,000 a year or more. In my own ministry, government services, there are 60 people making over a quarter of a million dollars a year. I would challenge even the minister to name one.

What's happening here is we are paying more—your spending is up by 67%—but the service level is down by any measure, and I think this is just unacceptable in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The honourable member for London—Fanshawe has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I want to thank the members from Newmarket—Aurora, Welland, Richmond Hill and Durham for commenting on my speech.

First, I want to go to the member from Newmarket—Aurora: I don't want him to support the government; I want him to support the people of Ontario. He needs to decide if he's on the side of the people of Ontario or on the side of the drug companies. I have nothing against the drug companies, but we have to be fair when we apply our policies and how we can create a mechanism to protect the people of Ontario. That's what we are doing on this side of the House.

Also, the member from Welland: Look, when the economy hit North America and around the globe, it was tough for many different nations. Sometimes we cannot control it. But the most important thing is not to panic but to create a plan to absorb the result of the negative impact on the people of Ontario, and to try to stimulate the economy and create more jobs for the people of Ontario. That's what we did by continuing to invest in our infrastructure, by making rules and regulations to allow people to come to this province and reinvest and show some kind of confidence in this province.

Also, the member from Richmond Hill was right; it's important to invest in our children and youth, and also in the universities and colleges, because that's the future of this economy and the future of all our lives. It's very important.

The member from Durham: I want to tell him something. What we said is true. We want to invest in education and health care and infrastructure because we believe this is the only way we can survive in this province of Ontario. It's the only way we can build a stronger future for the generations to come. I want to tell him that we're not shy about our record. We're going to continue advancing ourselves in this direction in order to achieve our goal, which is prosperity for this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** In the few minutes I have, unfortunately, on the budget bill, Bill 16—I'm trying to represent my constituents from the riding of Durham.

We had two post-budget open houses in my riding of Durham, serving Uxbridge, Scugog and Clarington, and

both of those presentations were put on by reputable accounting firms—BDO Dunwoody in the north. It was held in Port Perry. The mayor of Uxbridge was there, Scugog was represented, as well as business leaders and retired persons. There were about 50 persons at the one in Port Perry from Uxbridge and Port Perry. In the south, at the other one I had, there were about 70 people involved or who attended—almost all of council, including the mayor; the head of the utility; representatives from OPG; the board of trade; a couple of the Rotarians; the president of the rotary club; and other members of the community.

The interpretation that they said was, "What is the future?" When you look at the overall budget, in excess of \$110 billion, there's still \$21 billion—probably around 20% of the total spending is deficit. Deficit is really the lack of funding for the operational budget, and it actually becomes accumulated debt.

When you look at the accumulated debt in Ontario, it's increasing. It has increased every single year in the province. In fact, my own impression is that you don't like to criticize spending if it's for the right reasons, but you like to measure the outcomes of that spending. The most important part that the Premier said in remarks on budget day—health care is one example, and maybe I'll spend my time on this document on two areas that are very important to my riding.

The two areas, of course, would be health care—and the Premier said in the budget speech itself that, in 12 years, 70% of the entire provincial budget would be health care. That's not sustainable, and I suspect we're seeing now just the beginnings of the battle which will be fought on the backs of patients.

But let's take a little look at where we are today. I met last week with Dr. Michael Damus, as well as members of the Central LHIN, which covers the Uxbridge Cottage Hospital, along with Mayor Bob Shepherd. Our concern is that we want the hospital to remain as a full-service emergency level hospital. We'd like to have elective surgeries there as well.

But what is happening is, unless the doctors are adequately compensated or the hospital indeed is compensated through the Central LHIN, the local health integration network, they can't keep the hospital emergency open. If they can't keep it open, it becomes nothing more than you enter the hospital, you're stabilized and transferred to the Markham-Stouffville site, which is part of that hospital organization. There was the same challenge this year in Port Perry, as well as in Bowmanville. Bowmanville hospital was threatened as well because of the funding deficit.

All hospitals in the province right now are required by law, Bill 8, to have a balanced budget, but we know that almost every hospital has an operating deficit. In fact, during the two by-elections, strangely enough some \$15 million showed up to keep one open because there was a by-election, to favour the candidate in that area in Toronto. But that money was taken from one down in the Niagara-Hamilton-Welland area. In fact, a young person died en



route to hospital because the emergency had been closed. That is an autopsy report, not something I'm making up. Every hospital in every community—Northumberland Hills Hospital just outside my riding—Lou Rinaldi's riding—closed, I think, 15 beds and laid off 23 full-time nursing staff.

What else is important in this is that one of the complex issues in the Peterborough Regional Health Centre is that they have an audit. They're under a complete watch order now; they've taken over. That hospital is operating at about an \$11-million operating deficit and forecasted next year for a \$25-million operating deficit. I wish the auditors and the restructuring people there good luck, but that audit team was put in there by Premier McGuinty, taking over the autonomy of a local hospital.

Here's the outcome. I read the reports on it, and it turns out they have an inordinate number of ALC patients, alternate level of care. Those patients in a hospital—the worst possible setting for frail elderly people is to stay in a hospital with all these anti-viral infections and things like that going on. The nursing staff are so pressed and stressed that they don't have enough time. They should actually be moved to long-term care or complex continuing care in a different institutional setting.

Let's follow up on that. The biggest problem in hospitals today is the number of ALC—long-term-care—beds. They're in hospitals. Why? Because there are no long-term-care beds being built for our aging population. Why aren't they being built? When we were government, we added and funded 20,000 new long-term care beds. Here's the issue. As they opened more of them, the funding is \$40,000 per long-term-care bed.

0940

Now what we were debating yesterday in this House—and I participated. I see Mr. Phillips, the minister, is here. I have a great deal of respect for Mr. Phillips. But this file, Bill 21—it's on the order paper now—is regulation of retirement homes.

Let's not get confused here. Retirement homes are not regulated today but they exist, and they should be regulated. I'm in support of the bill. But what they're not saying is that the province is not providing them any money. So if you are going to be discharged from a hospital to a retirement home—the average person in a retirement home would be there and basically the province takes your OAS, old age security, and your CPP, Canada pension plan, up to about \$800 or \$900 a month. The province takes that and they fund the rest. If you have no other resources, they guarantee that you will have at least \$150 a month, called a personal care allowance. So if you're penniless, the province pays the rest—about \$40,000 per bed. The second part is that in these retirement homes there is no money. So if they discharge you to a retirement home, you're paying.

What does it cost in one of those retirement homes? I know at first hand. A less expensive one would be in the \$30,000-a-year range, maybe \$35,000 a year. That's out of your pocket or your mother or dad's pocket. In fact, the high-order ones—I'm looking at one for a person

who I have power of attorney for right now in Peterborough. It's Canterbury Gardens. The cost per year is \$65,000. Now, who is paying for it? I think it's a beautiful facility. The person is paying for it.

Let's just follow up on that \$65,000. What are your parents? You want loved ones being taken care of. This Bill 21 is private long-term care. That's what it is. No question about it. They're privatizing health. Right now, to pay \$65,000, a senior would have to take \$100,000 out of their RIF, because after tax they'd only get about \$68,000; you pay some 30% tax. And you want some money to get your hair done or whatever it is they do. I can't believe it. That's the future.

I expect the minister here to at least announce that he's going to ask for some companion funding under Bill 21. That is one of the amendments I would move. The minister is here and I'm sure he's listening.

If you look across health care, there is a very large battle with the pharmaceutical companies, but they're taking on the smallest participant in the drug battle. Of the billions of dollars spent in pharmaceutical care—which is important, and we should all recognize that it is the fastest-growing portion of health care, with costs escalating at about 15% per year, which, again, is not sustainable. I recognize the government is trying to contend with it, but there are three major participants. There is large pharma, the patent drug companies. They're international, they have global influence on jobs and research, universities and academic institutions, and they're an important part of the knowledge-based economy. I think even Barack Obama has tried to take them on, and good for him. How's he doing?

Here's the next part: The other participant is the generic drug part. The generic part is when the patent has expired and the formula has been copied by the generic company and they sell it for something less.

So Premier McGuinty and his health minister, Deb Matthews, are taking them on, but they're portraying it as a fight with the pharmacists. Keep in mind that what they call these promotional allowances, or whatever they're calling these things, have, under the government's watch and accord, been happening for years. It's not something that just happened in the last couple of months; it's happened for years. These promotional allowances were to educate and promote both the consumer and themselves, monitor side effects for certain drugs and all these various things. It's not like they're just doling out chocolate bars at the pharmacy. These are highly trained individuals—four-years-plus of a degree in medical and medical-related things—anatomy and pharmacology. They know more about pharmacology than the doctors themselves, I would put forward.

So they're picking a battle with the pharmacists, but what they're actually doing is changing the whole ball game. Let's be honest here. There's about \$1 billion in this amount of transactional money, we'll call it, from the generic drug industry—a very large, lucrative industry; no problem with that. But the pharmacists in my little communities of Uxbridge and Port Perry and Claring-



ton—and Clarington more specifically, because I know personally on a social level one of the pharmacists in Orono: Tito—great guy, well-educated, a pleasant community person involved in many ways in his community as a volunteer and as a professional. He will likely be closed. Why? Because they have fundamentally changed the rules of the game and they're blaming him.

They could easily have found a way of transitioning out of this. What's the difference here? Why is it that they need—right now Ontario has some of the lowest dispensing fees in Canada on a per capita basis. Here's the real issue: To dispense an appropriate pharmaceutical product on a prescription takes skill, knowledge, trust, confidence, and all these qualities that we expect these people to have. They're actually not being subsidized properly.

Doctors are paid by you and me, and 99% of them, I'm sure, earn every dollar they make, whether you're an orthopaedic surgeon, neurologist or cardiologist. I sure want the best at my bedside at the time I fall off my feet. With pharmacists, I feel the same. But right now they are not being compensated, and have been compensated on these, what they call, allowances. The government is calling them kickbacks. They want these pharmaceutical stores to stay open—and there's more to it. I could spend more time on that, because here's what's happening: Some of the generic drugs are now being dried up in Ontario and you're going to have to buy the patent drug. I have one that's a heart pill, and I'll put it on the record. That heart medication that you're buying today as a generic is \$38 a tablet. The drug you're going to get in my riding in the next week for that heart medication has been replaced by the designer drug, I guess you'd call it; it's now \$68. That's just one example of a widely used, widely prescribed medication in Ontario. That's what's going to happen.

The province is actually going to take the \$1 billion, they're going to pocket \$500 million of it and they're going to give the pharmacists a dispensing fee increase of \$1 when right now they're underfunded by \$7 per prescription compared to other comparators in the country. I'm not going to go on on that, but that's all part of health care.

The second part—it's in the clippings this morning. This is all planned; I can't believe it. I'm just amazed at this whole thing—it's like a dance. BC is looking at a new way of funding hospitals on a per-service fee. BC is leading the way on that, and it's going to fundamentally change the way they fund programs in hospitals.

Now a group in Ontario just casually, coincidentally announced that doctors are overpaid. I see another cloud on the horizon for doctors in Ontario. They're floating it as that a third party group has released a report this morning that says in a general sense—and it's in the clippings here—that doctors are overpaid.

It's not Premier McGuinty saying it. No. They'll probably do a poll next week to see just how much depth in the public—not the doctors; the public: "Doctors are making \$200,000 a year? Holy smokes; \$200,000, \$300,000,

\$400,000?" What's the threshold of tolerance for the people who are basically unemployed? We have a 10% unemployment rate; let's keep that in mind. This economy is based on having no plan in the economy. If we had lots of money we'd be doing pretty much the same thing, but when you don't, you have to learn how to put the spending in order, and that's the second part.

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The other part I wanted to talk about that the member from London—Fanshawe spoke about briefly is energy prices. I'm going to put that in context as well. If we look back at Ontario's Sir Adam Beck, Ontario was once applauded and respected. If you drive down University Avenue, you will see a statue of Sir Adam Beck. He was basically the father of electricity, or electricity distribution, certainly. He had a theme, and it was "Power at cost," which means a publicly operated utility. What he really meant was power at any cost, that Ontario's economy was built on cheap—or at least safe, reliable and affordable—electricity. That's what Ontario's economy was built on.

If you look at an article in the media yesterday by Don MacKinnon, who is the president of the power workers—Peter, I'm sure you've read this article—it's an excellent article. Here is what he said. It's a very technical article, but generally he says that, unfortunately, this misguided focus on trendy, headline-motivated policy is rapidly eroding any price advantage while ignoring existing strengths. He's referring to how, with the right decisions, Ontario could be an energy leader. He's talking about the frivolous renewable/sustainable energy policy in Ontario, paying 80 cents a kilowatt hour for roof-mounted solar and 16 cents an hour for wind, and at the meter we're paying about five to six cents. How is that being subsidized? We're being locked into these long-term, 20-year-plus contracts with these sustainable/renewable providers, some of them foreign, like Samsung. I'm so discouraged about the lack of confidence in Ontario on the energy file. It's just so disheartening to think our universities and our expertise cannot be respected by the Premier, instead of having to go to Korea to import their skills and knowledge. We have it right here in Ontario. There is a complete vacuum of respect for our own—not just the pharmacists, but now the electrical people and the doctors and the professors.

I'm worried about the future. You can't spend your way into prosperity. Quite honestly, we're spending our way into recession. Ontario is in worse shape than any other province, and the future doesn't even look brighter. I think it's discouraging, quite frankly. I challenge the government to stop and take a look and work with our leader, Tim Hudak. We do have a plan. In fact, we were asked by the member from London—Fanshawe what our plan is.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** You don't have a plan.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Our plan is first—and the member on the other side was saying that they don't know. Well, I agree they don't. You don't seem to have a plan by any measure. I would say that for us, if you want to



look on our website, you should check 10for2010.ca. If you look at that and at the suggestions we made about accountability and transparency on public spending, on public contracts—think of the eHealth scandal: a billion dollars of health dollars wasted. Look at the LHINs. There's more waste in government. You have a \$100-billion-plus budget, and if you couldn't save 5%, then you aren't capable of managing. So I ask for your comments—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's a pleasure to speak after Mr. O'Toole.

There is no question that this budget reflects Liberal values and Liberal thinking. I think that's undebatable in this chamber. This is a government that talks about there being a deficit out there, about there being a financial crisis that they are having to deal with. Yet this is a government that is quite happy, quite willing, to hire a company called Goldman Sachs that was at the centre of the world financial crash. This government is willing to hire as advisers a company that sold financial instruments—asset-backed commercial paper—that were based on a fantasy about mortgages being paid back, and then was willing to sell the bet that those assets would collapse. This government has taken that company on as their advisers.

This government is quite happy to contemplate selling off revenue-generating assets when it talks about the financial needs that this province has. OLG, LCBO, Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation between them generate about \$4 billion a year in revenue for this province. Why would you sell off assets that produce a large volume of revenue and, frankly, are critical to delivering your policies on energy and your policies in terms of making sure that the sale of alcohol is made appropriately? The contemplation of the sale of those assets reflects Liberal values, Liberal values being "We're going to look as nice as we can, and we're going to sell the silverware to pay for an operation, an approach that is not sustainable."

This budget is a failure. This province deserves more.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It's certainly a pleasure to stand here and discuss Bill 16, and also to make some comments on the remarks by the member from Durham. He spent a considerable amount of his time talking about health care. I think buried in there somewhere was an acknowledgment that we have made strides. He alluded to the hospital in Peterborough, which, as far as I've heard, is state of the art and a huge addition to that community and the broader community around the city of Peterborough.

We've certainly had many successes in health care. There are now 900,000 more Ontarians who have access to family physicians. We've reduced wait times for many surgical procedures, including cancer surgeries. Our Open

Ontario plan certainly shows that we remain focused on quality improvement in health care.

But given our deficit situation, of course we have to look for cost savings, and we are doing this in many different areas. The area that is being talked about a lot at the moment is reforming the cost of generic drugs. It is certainly a situation that needs to be addressed. Ontario is paying some 50% more than other jurisdictions for generic drugs.

Lowering the cost to 25% of the original brand name drug for people who receive their drugs through the Ontario drug benefit program will also benefit those who get their drugs through private employer drug plans and people who pay for drugs out of pocket. All in all, we're going to be saving taxpayers millions of dollars with this particular strategy. By eliminating the professional allowances, we will be compensating pharmacists more directly for the services they offer. This is a good step forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to make a few comments on my colleague, the member from Durham's speech he just gave a few minutes ago on Bill 16.

One of the things I'm most concerned about, as a rural politician, with the rollout of this budget and the debate on the budget—and I think what my constituents are concerned about as well—is the debt we are accumulating in the province of Ontario. It's my understanding that when Premier Dalton McGuinty came to power in 2003, the total accumulated debt of the province of Ontario was \$114 billion. That's from John A. Macdonald's days right through till 2003.

If you look at the budget document itself and the projections through to the year 2017-18, when Mr. McGuinty or the finance minister claims he will balance the budget, the accumulated debt will rise to just shy of \$250 billion, which is a quarter of a trillion dollars in my way of thinking.

That scares me. I know that we can talk about infrastructure investments and health care and all these different things you can talk about and you can brag about, but the reality is, every government since the beginning of time has had those same kinds of challenges, but they haven't taken a budget from 2003 and, 14 years later, have doubled the accumulated debt in the province of Ontario. That scares me a lot.

My constituents are concerned about that, and along with things like pharmacy and HST, I think it will be a high-level election issue for this government in 2011, when we go to the polls.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** How does one dare respond to an address by the member from Durham? But I shall try.

The member for Durham references Sir Adam Beck. Sir Adam Beck would be a nobody, a minor, obscure member of the lower nobility, if it weren't for Nikola Tesla. I for one want to make it clear that our electricity



system here in the province of Ontario—and across North America and the world—is a result of the genius of Nikola Tesla. As I say, he is so often unsung, but we should acknowledge his most significant contribution to the 20th and 21st centuries.

Look, the government's taken on pharmacists, and let's make this clear: The big-box pharmacies are going to survive regardless, because they don't make money selling drugs. They make money with those cosmetics counters and the high-priced toiletries with huge mark-ups, a product that in many respects is recession-proof. The people who will suffer, the people who will be displaced, are small-town corner pharmacists, the kind of pharmacist I grew up with and still patronize down in Welland where I come from, or in Port Colborne or Wainfleet or Thorold.

This government should be taking on the drug companies, but it has neither the guts nor the gonads to do that. They don't have the gumption to take on the big international drug companies. Because if you want to talk about obscene drug prices, those are the villains, not the pharmacist; not the guy who corrects the doctor's prescription because you have an allergy to something that the doctor mistakenly prescribed because he or she is so harried and rushed. So rather than take on real villains, this government creates villains out of some of the greatest, noblest and finest people in our communities: small-town pharmacists.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The honourable member for Durham has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I want to thank the members from Danforth, Oak Ridges–Markham, Simcoe North, of course, and the member for Welland for his very respectable comments; he's a great, experienced debater himself.

I'd only say that the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, who is a doctor, Dr. Jaczek, was the medical officer of health for York region. I have a lot of respect for your comments and hope that you would speak up for the challenges facing health care, and bring some—it's a discredit that you're not actually the Minister of Health; they have doctors sitting in the caucus who basically don't have any serious responsibilities. I say that respectfully, not critically.

I think that this is an important time for all members to represent how this budget affects their riding. I look at my riding and the auto sector. The restructuring in the economy just in Durham is a good example of what Ontario is going through. But then if I look in the north, there's a special provision in the budget because the north is paralyzed in recession. The pulp and paper industry and the forestry industry generally are in serious, serious trouble. A lot of the mining and resource sectors are in trouble as well, and a lot of them are very dependent on having reliable energy.

This budget falls short. It has no plan to deal with future spending. It has committed to reducing spending by 1.5%, I believe, on average; that is not sustainable

either. They have to find new ways and new partnerships to deliver services across the schedule, yet they have a predisposition to tax and spend in excess of the health of the economy. Unless the economy picks up, we're headed for a double dip in Ontario.

We need leadership that's prepared to say, "Here's the plan," and work together. Our leader, Tim Hudak, will be there—and I'm sure the NDP and Andrea Horwath would be there as well—because this is about the people of Ontario, not political interests.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Given that we will be adjourning within the next few minutes, I will be giving the opening part of my one-hour leadoff. I'll have the opportunity, I gather, in a few days to continue through.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I note that there are enthusiasts out there.

The member from London–Fanshawe talked about the deficit that this province is wrestling with and the fact that the government is faced with a financial crisis in the broader society that it is trying to come to grips with. It's trying to manage its financial, social and political obligations in the context of that crisis.

I want to talk about the context of this budget, but before I do that, I have to remark again, because it is extraordinary to me that this government, recognizing the scale and scope of the global financial crisis, has hired a company, Goldman Sachs, that has been testifying before the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission in the United States about its role in that financial crash. I alluded to this briefly in my remarks earlier.

Goldman Sachs, a broker company and investment banker, sold financial instruments that sold asset-backed bonds that were based on quicksand. It sold those to institutional investors and investors around the world, and those bonds were the equivalent of selling houses that were going to burn down. At the same time, it sold, to others who were interested, insurance that those houses would burn down and even bought that insurance knowing those houses would burn down. In the heart of the financial crisis, they gained somewhere in the range of \$10 billion, cashing in those insurance policies on asset-backed commercial paper, those IOUs they sold that were just simply junk.

When you have a government that is dealing with profound financial problems, and it hires a company that was at the centre of the crisis that has afflicted the globe, you have to ask about its judgment in terms of who it brings on board to advise it. This government faces, within 18 months, an election, and in some ways this is similar to the situation that faced the Harris government at the end of the 1990s. That was a government that needed cash to cover a budget deficit; it needed cash so it could address the financial demands, the needs, of this province; and a government that sold an asset at about a quarter of the value that it is now assessed at.

Dalton McGuinty wants to be very clear that he isn't doing the same as Mike Harris. That is his public line.



That's his messaging. So when he met with the editorial board of the *Globe*, as reported by Adam Radwanski, he said that we don't want to be seen as burning the furniture to keep the house warm. He's trying to figure out where to allocate the money that would be forthcoming from a sale. He has a problem, because the simple reality is he is breaking up the furniture to heat the house. If he applies it to the deficit, people will understand very quickly that's not sustainable; it is a one-time hit and that, in fact, he has gotten rid of a revenue stream, a series of levers for the operation of this province, for a quick hit before an election.

He doesn't have a lot of other good-looking options. One of the options that was floated in Mr. Radwanski's column was using the money to pay for assets, possibly in post-secondary education, but it's just a shell game. If you need a few billion in one pocket, and you put it in that pocket, then, money is available in another pocket. It is all a shell game. You have to understand this budget is being written in the context of an election happening in the next 18 months: "How do we find the cash to look as good as possible?" Not, "How do we make sure that the long-term interests of this province are safeguarded?" That's the question that has to be asked. That's the question that has to be answered. And hiring a company that was one of the central architects of the financial projects that caused the world economy to crash is not something that's defensible.

We have a larger context for this budget. If you talk to Armine Yalnizyan at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, if you read articles about what has happened with income in this province and in this country, you'll see that for the last few decades the income of the middle class in this country and this province has been stagnant. People have been working hard, people have been upgrading their skills, but the central reality is that the broad middle class in this province has had its income stagnate.

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The wealthiest have gotten wealthier; the poorest have gotten poorer. And, in the middle, that group that our economy depends on for purchase of goods to drive the economy; that group that is the social backbone of this province, because they're the ones who get the education, hold down the skilled jobs, do many of the critical things that the economy of this province demands—and frankly, membership in that class is something that people aspire to, either to get into or to maintain a position in. That income stagnation arises because of a decline in the economic base of this province, and this budget has to be understood in the context of that decline.

In any society, when a province, a country or a city writes a budget, it reflects its underlying wealth and it reflects the different power between social and interest groups in that society. The underlying wealth of this society has been threatened. I ask you, if you go to London, Hamilton, Windsor, Cambridge, Kingston—all over this province—people see manufacturing in decline, economic activity in decline, loss of middle-income jobs, forcing people into very low-paying jobs.

That's a substantial piece that has to be addressed. It's not addressed in this budget. This budget is part of the management of the decline, rather than an attempt to reverse that decline. It is not a budget that is actually going to take on the fundamental weaknesses in Ontario's economy and address those weaknesses. That's a profound problem.

This government, this Liberal government, has been making some very high-cost choices in terms of the future for this province. Instead of taking on sprawl in the way it needed to be taken on, it's going to allow sprawl to continue. It may nip a bit here, tuck a bit there—and recently the Pembina Institute brought out a report about the cost of sprawl and congestion on the economic centre of the province, the greater Golden Horseshoe—but the simple reality is that more and more greenfield sites are going to be eaten up for sprawl, and that is going to have huge impacts in terms of costs to provide infrastructure and huge costs in terms of the congestion that will arise from that, all of which will weaken and undermine our economy. This budget does not take the steps necessary to address that, and the policy decisions made by this government leading up to this budget don't address that.

Once again, the fundamental problems facing our economy, the ones that need to be addressed so that we are an affordable and attractive jurisdiction, aren't being addressed. That is a huge problem.

Just recently a study came out about the impact on health care of the ban on smoking in bars and restaurants in the Toronto area. I have to say, in the 1990s I was one of the pioneers of efforts to prohibit smoking in bars and restaurants. The simple reality, when you look at the demographics, is that Toronto cut visits to emergency rooms for people with breathing problems and heart problems quite substantially, quite noticeably. So in fact, when you take actions in the wider world that impact on people's health, then you have an impact on health care costs.

This government is in a position to put its coal-fired generators on standby. Demand for power has been dropping, but we're still burning coal. This government knows very well that burning coal causes death, causes health damage. It could be acting much more quickly than it is to help contain health care costs by reducing deadly air pollution. It is not doing that. That is an underlying factor that drives health care costs.

I understand that my time is limited and I will take up the rest of my speech when I next have the opportunity.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** It being 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** On behalf of our page Avery Watters, I'd like to introduce members of her family who are here today: her father, Mike Watters; her brother,



Cameron Watters; family friend Mike Healy; and their grandmother Rita Mueller. Welcome to Queen's Park. Enjoy the day.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's my absolute delight to introduce this year's girls' government team. They're from Annette and Runnymede public schools. They're going to be meeting with Minister Bradley and they're going to Ottawa next month to meet with a cabinet minister. They're accompanied by Michael Kanalec and Vanessa Shrimpton, their teachers. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I know that members will want to join me in welcoming Maureen and Eric Sanderson, who are in the gallery today, from my community. It is Eric's birthday today, so we wish him a happy birthday.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I would like to welcome to the Legislature this morning Mr. Sukhdial Singh Bhullar. He's a retired inspector general of police from Punjab, India, and he is the most decorated officer in the police forces in Punjab.

Accompanying him is Mr. Devinder S. Sangha. He's a good friend of mine. He just moved from Montreal to Ontario. I think finally he saw the light. Welcome.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I'd like to introduce Sylvia Maracle in the gallery, who is head of the Friendship Centres.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Oxford and page Kyle Rutherford, to welcome his mother, Carolynn Rutherford; his father, Mark Rutherford; his sister, Jenna Rutherford; his cousin Cole Pirie; his grandmother Sandra Rutherford; his grandfather John Rutherford; his grandmother Irene Baker; and his grandfather Ralph Baker. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ENERGY RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Premier. Can you list how many different rate increases, taxes and fees the McGuinty Liberals are imposing on Ontario families' energy bills?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We've said many times—and I've said it in this place and I've said it in response to questions from the member—that there is no question energy prices are on the increase in Ontario. We've been saying that for some time, but there is reason for that. One of the reasons is, when we came to office we inherited an energy system that was in an absolute shambles, an energy system where the supply of energy just was not adequate enough to ensure the sustainability and the reliability of our energy system. So we've had to make investments in nuclear modernization; we've had to build new gas plants; we've had to invest in renewables.

There is no question: Worldwide, the cost of energy is going up, and will be going up in this province as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** George Smitherman promised 1%. We know where that went.

The minister won't answer the question, so I will. The McGuinty Liberals are making Ontario families pay for the following: a \$5-a-month regulated price increase; \$8 a month for the HST; \$38 a year for the loss of the small-volume discount; \$5 a month for the smart meter program; your \$53-million backdoor energy tax grab; a \$5-a-month so-called green subsidy; the \$437-million Samsung subsidy; a \$2.75-a-month OPG rate increase; and \$1.6 billion for Hydro One transmission expenses. That does not even include the Hydro One debt retirement charge or distribution charges, regulatory charges—the list goes on and on.

Can you at least come clean with Ontario families, seniors and businesses and tell them how much more the McGuinty Liberals are going to make them pay for energy this year?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I thank the honourable member for reminding me of another thing that we're paying for: Consumers are paying for the debt that they built up in all the years of mismanagement, through their entire term in office, when it comes to energy. Our consumers today have to pay for your mistakes.

But we as a government and as a generation have a responsibility to future generations to ensure that we get it right. That does ensure that today, we have to make some of the tough decisions that their party refused to make when they had the opportunity to handle these files: investing in more nuclear to ensure that we have an adequate level of nuclear; investing in the modernization of our nuclear system, in the refurbishment of Darlington; investing in renewables—something that's important. We're leading the world when it comes to growing renewables in this province, something every—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** If the McGuinty Liberals can't do the math, we'll do it for them. Ontario families will pay at least \$300 more per year because of their policy. One leading energy adviser group estimates that after all your new green—so-called green—subsidies roll out, Ontario families will pay \$631 more each per year. They don't even consider the cost of your Samsung deal, proposed retrofits or HST tax grab.

The \$5 rate increase being announced today sends the price of electricity up more than 60% since you came to office, and who knows what pending generation cost increases will come with new gas plants in Oakville and North York, what they will add? Will you just say, once and for all: How much is too much for you?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We inherited, as I said before, an energy system that was in shambles. We've had to make tough decisions. We know that the cost of energy is going up, not only in Ontario but around the world. But we're making the tough decisions that we need to make today to ensure that we have a reliable supply for tomorrow, and in making those tough decisions, we're growing



renewables in this province. We're creating jobs and building the next-generation economy.

My question to the member is: What is your plan? You come down on us; what is your plan? You have no plan. You want to go back to coal. Your love affair with coal continues to this day. As the Conservatives are cuddling up to coal, we're doing all we can to build a cleaner, brighter future for the next generation through investing in renewables. We're going to keep going in that direction—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### ENERGY RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Premier. If a concerned Ontario family or senior wants to know how much more they will be paying for hydro this year, where can they go?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The Ontario Energy Board regulates energy prices, and the Ontario Energy Board, at least two times a year, comes forward with rate increases. This is—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You just have to say it's all your decisions—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Renfrew: You just asked the question. I don't know how you can listen to the answer when I have difficulty hearing it because of your heckling. You know the rules; if you're not satisfied in the end, you can call for a late show.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The Ontario Energy Board regulates the prices of energy. In fact, this is about the time of year when the Ontario Energy Board comes forward, as they do biannually every year, to indicate what the cost of energy will be and what the price to the consumers will be. They make seasonal adjustments to the rates and thresholds to accommodate for summer and winter. So I think that the member will hear very soon from the Ontario Energy Board, who will determine what the increases will be for this year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Their decisions on energy prices are based completely on the policies that you give them.

Dalton McGuinty spares no effort to increase Ontario's hydro bills at every opportunity, but makes no effort to let the public know about it. According to an Ontario Energy Board letter of April 9, you're directing electricity distributors to bury your backdoor energy tax grab in the regulatory charges section of the bill, so you're hiding this tax from Ontario families, the very people who will pay it.

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Will the McGuinty Liberals rethink the plan to bury the backdoor energy tax and post it on a separate line on people's energy bills, or will Ontario families have to

read the blog of the Premier's strategic adviser Andrew Steele just to know when you're increasing the tax and by how much?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We're working very hard with our energy partners. In fact, this is something that our entire generation has to work towards, and that's to transform our energy system from the system we inherited that was reliant on dirty coal, from a system that was simply not reliable in terms of energy supply. We're making the investments today to ensure that that system indeed is reliable.

I know the member doesn't support that. He wants to move us back to the day when we turned the lights on every morning when we got up and we were never ever sure whether they would actually be able to turn on. He wants to move us back to the days of coal.

I say this again: Watching the Tories cuddle up to coal is something that should strike fear into the hearts and minds of every Ontarian who cares about the health of their kids.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They've been promising to shut down coal since John Gerretsen's hair was black and they'll be promising until Brad Duguid's is grey.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I remind the honourable member that we refer to members by their riding name or their ministry.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The market price for electricity is at historic lows, but the McGuinty Liberals have added so many regulatory increases, taxes and fees that Ontario families, seniors and businesses now see their electricity bills at historic highs.

It's bad enough that you aren't even being transparent about all these taxes and fees on electricity bills, but the same OEB letter makes it clear that you're using electricity bills to raise taxes for general revenue. You have instructed utilities on how to collect taxes from families and businesses and send it along to the Minister of Finance.

Why have you turned local utility companies into tax collectors?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I know John Gerretsen, and John Gerretsen's a friend of mine—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

The same reminder that I just gave to the honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke applies to the minister.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker: I've been environment minister for two and a half years and I've only had two questions from the official opposition. I'm looking forward to a third question in the immediate future to show that they're interested in the environment of this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I remind all members again that we refer to riding names and ministry offices.

Minister?



**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think the difference between us and them is that we have a plan to ensure that the future of energy in this province is sustainable, reliable and indeed affordable.

But if you look back in history, Tories weren't always that bad. In the early 20th century, there was opposition to hydro power from Niagara Falls. Premier Whitney in those days moved forward with that and that powered our economy in Canada for many years into the future. Whitney was a Conservative; he had vision. How sad it is today to see the Tories when they've moved away from any vision at all.

Ontario is the leader in clean energy. We're a leader around the world. Our investments today will be looked on in the future as being visionary down the road in building a stronger economy and a brighter—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. The Premier says that he's breaking his promise to fund the construction of Toronto's Transit City light rail lines because this government simply can't afford them. How much money is Ontario actually saving from this decision?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's \$4 billion. We've been public about that. We made reference to that on budget day.

What we're doing is adjusting the timetable. It allows us to save this money in the short term, and it'll require that it be expended in the longer term.

I think my honourable colleague has to recognize that our revenues have been affected as a government because of a global recession. We've had to make some choices. We said that we would prefer not to make cuts to our hospitals, not to make cuts to our schools, but instead to stretch out our timetable when it comes to investing in public transit. Again, as I've said many times, I think that's reasonable and, I'd argue, it's responsible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We know there are significant divisions on the government side over this wrong-headed decision. In fact, Toronto city councillors tell me that they've heard from several panicked government MPPs who have told them that the province, in fact, will only save about \$100 million a year, at most. That's because the province can amortize their transit investment over 40 years. One hundred million represents less than 0.1% of Ontario's 2010-11 budget. That's a small price to pay to improve public transit, to enhance economic productivity and to help the environment.

So I ask: What is the real story behind the Premier's broken promise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think the Minister of Finance would like to speak to this.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, we are continuing along with our investments. We are adjusting the time

frames. Those time frames are still very much five to seven years out in terms of when any of the projects would have started in any event.

The member is right: These projects can be amortized over an extended period of time, but if she were to look carefully, she would see that the borrowing and the cash flow has to happen at the outset. What this does is it allows us to develop these lines appropriately, finance them appropriately, and continue along the path that this government has taken over the last seven years, and that is to invest heavily in public transit, both in the greater Toronto area and indeed right across the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Toronto-area families deserve a full explanation from this Premier. Moms and dads will continue to miss dinner with the kids because they'll continue to be stuck in traffic.

Given what we know about Toronto's gridlock and its negative impact on the local economy, how can the Premier continue to claim that his decision is fiscally responsible when in fact it is the exact opposite?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I want to remind the leader of the New Democratic Party that we are now providing Toronto with five times the amount of funding they were provided with in 2003. We have invested over \$9.3 billion in public transit. We are keeping our commitments on all the projects while we are adjusting the timetables. We will fund the full cost of the Transit City projects. But, as the Premier indicated, given our deficit this year of \$21 billion, we feel it is both appropriate and responsible to adjust those timelines, recognizing that the projects under consideration wouldn't even begin construction for probably six or seven years. Accordingly, we made the decisions we've made. We will continue to make the investments we've made in public transit. It is a responsible and appropriate policy for this time.

### PENSION PLANS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My second question is to the Premier as well. Yesterday, at a conference, pension expert Keith Ambachtsheer made a startling point. He said that fees on the \$700 billion held in private savings plans are sucking up \$8.4 billion more than contributors would pay if they were saving inside large public pension plans. That's \$8.4 billion that is going into the coffers of banks and insurance companies and not into the retirement savings of Ontarians and Canadians.

With banks and insurance companies lobbying to increase their role in overseeing retirement savings, where does the Ontario government stand in this historic pension debate?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Ambachtsheer yesterday morning, albeit briefly. It's one of a number of meetings we have had to discuss the issues. He has put an element of the discussion that is before all Ontarians, and indeed all Canadians right now.



We talked yesterday. I shouldn't say we did; that was not part of my discussion with him. We did talk about the three pillars of savings in the Canadian pension system, the first being the public side of the system, the second being the private part and the third being tax-funded programs at the federal level, such as OAS and GIS. All Canadians are engaged in debate on ensuring that we have the best system possible.

The government laid out the options it's looking at in its budget. I would invite the member opposite to have a look at those options, and we will continue to work with all stakeholders on this important issue.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** There really are only two fundamental sides to this debate. On one side, there are those, like New Democrats, who passionately believe in public, cost-effective defined benefit plans. On the other side, there are those who support fee-loaded private options being promoted by the banks and insurance companies.

On behalf of the four million Ontarians who lack a pension plan, I once again ask this Premier, which side is he on?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We are on the side of the best possible pension system for all Ontarians. I would remind the member opposite that one of the reasons we began this discussion and why Premier McGuinty led this discussion at the national level is because only 30% of Ontarians have a pension. We are well aware of that.

Number two: The member opposite refuses to acknowledge that many Ontarians save through other vehicles, and that is simply a fact of life.

Number three: The member opposite has not spoken about the cost associated with this, other than on one side of the issue.

We have kept alive a number of options that are well defined in the budget. We will continue to work with other provinces and the federal government—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, this is not an academic exercise. This is about providing all Ontario workers with a secure and dignified existence in their retirement years. New Democrats have come down firmly on the side of public, defined benefit pension plans. We have made it clear that billions of dollars in savings should be going into the pockets of retirees and not into the coffers of banks and insurance companies. But unfortunately, nobody knows where this Premier and this finance minister stand.

It's a very, very simple question. Whose side are they on? With pensioners on the one side, as we are, or with bankers and insurance companies and their executives?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It is not a simple equation. In fact, the member opposite needs to address a number of important issues. Should we have a segregated pension system in Canada? That is every province with its own system—number one. Number two: We agree that the

cost-effective delivery of pension services is an extremely important variable, and we agree that, for instance, the Canada pension plan's costs of administration are lower than those of private-sector-sponsored plans.

But Canadians save in a variety of ways. If she is advocating getting rid of RRSP tax deductions, for instance, she should say so. She hasn't said that. If she is arguing against a range of other tax policies that benefit savers, she should say so.

This is an important issue. Premier McGuinty and his government continue to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## DRIVER LICENCES

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Premier: I want to ask the Premier about the Ontario driver's licence tourism industry over which his Minister of Transportation is presiding. This emerging industry is not only encouraging novice drivers from the GTA to visit remote parts of Ontario, but it also guarantees them driver's licences while they're there, licences they probably couldn't even qualify for in their home jurisdiction.

I'd like to know from the Premier, can he tell us how much longer his government intends to allow these flea market driver's licences to be issued? And can he explain why the Ministry of Transportation has been turning a blind eye to this mockery of our licensing system in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I am pleased to take the question. I'm not sure my honourable colleague intends what I think is a legitimate understanding of the question he is putting to us, which is that those people who work in the sector of testing young people for their licences are somehow using lower standards or are less effective or are less prepared to uphold Ontario standards than those working within the city of Toronto or the GTA. I think that's a serious allegation. I think he ought to carefully consider making that kind of allegation.

We're proud of the province-wide standard that we have in place. It's one of the highest, if not the highest, in North America when it comes to our graduated licensing system. We have one of the safest traffic records on our roads anywhere in North America in large part because of that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** It's precisely because we are concerned about road safety that we are challenging the Premier on this. It seems that everyone except the Premier and his Minister of Transportation understands that what's going on here is not only wrong; it's a threat to the safety of every motorist who ends up on the same roads as people who are getting their licences without the appropriate testing.

Here's how the president of one driving school explains why they haul carloads of students to remote parts of Ontario: "In Toronto, it's too difficult to get the licence



... it's more traffic ... it's easy to get their licence up there."

Will the Premier commit today to direct the Minister of Transportation to restrict DriveTest centres to testing applicants who live within the designated geographic area where the people live, to give credibility—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I will do no such thing. I think an Ontarian is an Ontarian is an Ontarian, and a standard is a standard is a standard. I have confidence that our driving standards are some of the strongest in North America. I have confidence that we apply the same standards whether we are in Kingston or Cornwall or Kenora or Windsor or Wawa or Toronto or Ottawa, or in any community in this province. Our responsibility is to make sure that we have strong standards, our responsibility is to make sure that our children, in particular, are enrolled in the best possible graduated licensing system, which we have here, and our responsibility is to uphold the safest track record, when it comes to our roads, in North America. We're proud of that, and that's what we're going to keep doing.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier. Your government knows that the HST is going to hit struggling Ontarians where it hurts: in their wallets and their purses. That's why you continue to roll out exemptions and rebates.

Earlier this week, the government said it would prevent landlords from increasing rents due to the impact of the HST on utilities and other costs. This will reduce the HST hit on tenants whose hydro and heat is included in their rent, but what is the government going to do to protect the growing number of tenants who pay their utilities with added HST separately from their rent?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** As the member would be aware, and as my colleague the Minister of Revenue would be prepared to tell you, of course, we have a whole tax package. What it does is, there are energy credits within that; there are credits that are available with the HST. They are the most generous in certainly all of Canada. Those credits are designed to ease the transition, first of all, and you will know there are three transition payments, but after that there are permanent credits, which are the highest in all of Canada. Our HST in Ontario, of course, will be 2% lower than that of NDP Nova Scotia, where recently the NDP Premier of Nova Scotia and finance minister announced that indeed there would be a 2% increase in their—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Well, I have to give the minister marks for not answering the question, because he's very good at it.

Minister, tenants are the most economically vulnerable Ontarians; one third of them already live in poverty. Most tenants simply can't afford to pay an additional 8% on their heat and hydro. All tenants deserve protection from the HST, not just those who happen to pay utilities as part of their rent.

Why won't you listen to groups like the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations and protect all tenants from the HST by giving a rebate to those tenants for the HST they have to pay on their electricity and heating bills?

1100

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** As the member may or may not be aware, the new Ontario property tax credit—I'm referring here to the property tax credit—for instance, will provide an additional \$270 million in property tax relief every year to low- and middle-income homeowners and tenants. It is estimated that Ontario's comprehensive tax plan, including the introduction of the HST and tax cuts for business, will help create almost 600,000 jobs for people. Almost three million people, low-income families in Ontario, will receive a new, permanent—I underline that word permanent—sales tax credit of up to \$260 for each adult and child per year, one of the most generous in all of Canada.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Changes to our drug system have caught the attention of my constituents, particularly seniors in the riding of Peterborough. Seniors often have to cope with tough chronic health problems, including cancer, diabetes, arthritis and dementia. With the recent announcement of drug reform, it is clear that 70% of the \$750 million paid for so-called professional allowances don't go towards direct patient services. This money would be better spent on more health services, specifically more low-cost drugs for Ontarians and Peterborians.

I understand the government's new plan includes lower costs for drugs and an end to provincial allowances, but can the minister please provide more details about how these changes will bring more drugs to the Ontario drug formulary?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you for the question. We're making these important reforms to make sure that Ontario families get access to lower-cost drugs, and more of them, as new drugs become available. Yesterday, as we do on a regular basis, we notified pharmacists about new drugs we're adding to Ontario's formulary. We are adding six new brand-name drugs and 24 new generic drugs. It's our proposed reforms that make new listings like this possible.

This is very good news for people with many different conditions including HIV, hypertension, high blood pressure, Parkinson's disease and many more health conditions. This expansion of our formulary builds on a record of achievement since our reforms began under Bill 102. Until yesterday, we had it at 150 new drugs, including 38 cancer-fighting drugs. Yesterday, we were permitted to add then another 30 new drugs. Our reforms—



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Seniors in my riding of Peterborough were relieved to hear that so many new drugs have been added to the formulary, and with the new reforms, there will be access to even more low-cost drugs.

Shoppers Drug Mart spent almost \$150,000 in one day in advertising in the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star* and the *Ottawa Citizen*. They're telling the public that they disagree with our proposed drug reforms and that the changes will result in a reduction of services. I understand that such distinguished groups as the Canadian Cancer Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation applaud the changes, saying they will improve access to important drugs.

But where do the seniors come in? Could the minister please tell this House how seniors feel about the changes to our drug system?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Not only does CARP, the seniors' advocacy group, support and welcome our proposed changes, they conducted a poll among their members, most of whom were seniors. Let me tell you what the seniors said about this. When asked about eliminating rebates as a way of lowering the cost of generic drugs, 92% of the seniors voted that they agree with us on this issue, and 85% of the voters disagreed with the notion that pharmacies claimed they cannot afford to do business without rebates. It is clear that seniors understand why we're making these reforms. They support our plan. They know it's the right thing to do to lower the cost of drugs in this province, which will allow us to cover more drugs on the formulary.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is for the Premier. Ontario families are just 77 days away from July 1 and your greedy HST tax grab being added to everything, but that hasn't stopped them from speaking out.

Bruce Sovran of Kingsville says, "Everyone who will be paying the HST will suffer. Given our current economy, I think this tax is proof that our government needs to be voted out because they don't care about us." The member from Essex won't stand up for Bruce Sovran, but I will.

Premier, will you listen to the hard-working people of Essex, who know what's good for them without you telling them, and scrap your greedy HST tax grab?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member for Essex does a terrific job representing his constituents; he doesn't need any advice from that member. I think that member ought to say why he was against the personal tax cut that came into effect on January 1. I think he ought to come clean and tell the people of Ontario why it is the Tories' own expert witness at pre-budget hearings the year before said that this policy will create 600,000 jobs, raise family incomes and raise capital investment.

This is a carefully constructed policy that lowers taxes for 93% of Ontarians. It will create jobs across the prov-

ince. It will help lead this province out of this global downturn that we've all experienced. It's the right policy. It's about jobs and a better future for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Again to the Premier: Residents in Ontario's southernmost town are not alone in condemning your greedy HST tax grab. David Harasymiw of Sault Ste. Marie says, "The creation of 600,000 jobs because of the harmonized sales tax—I don't think so. If anyone, including voting Liberals or any other voting human being thinks so, I have a mining company in Timmins that's going cheap."

The member for Sault Ste. Marie stands up for Dalton McGuinty instead of Dave Harasymiw, so I'll ask, Premier, will you scrap your greedy HST tax grab?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think Ontarians are also interested to know why his federal counterpart Tony Clement voted for this and why the federal Conservatives provided \$4 billion for this. I think they ought to answer that question. I think Ontarians are interested to know why your party said one thing before we introduced it and another thing after we introduced it. I think Ontarians want to know why your expert witnesses in the past have called for this and your party supported it and why you don't do it now.

I think most of all, while you talk a good game, why don't you stand in your place and tell Ontarians, will you abolish the tax when you form a government, if you form a government? I think they're trying to have it both ways. The people of Ontario can see through this masquerade and the people of Ontario will recognize, over time, that this tax policy is the right policy to create jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## FIRE SAFETY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the minister for seniors' affairs. On January 20 last year, a *Toronto Star* article was titled "No Sprinklers in Fatal Orillia Fire." Two residents of the Muskoka Heights Retirement Residence were killed and eight were hospitalized in critical condition. I'll quote from that article:

"Last night, Ontario's fire marshal and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs told the *Toronto Star* that all such buildings should be legally required to have sprinklers, regardless of designation.

"There's nobody I know of in the fire service that doesn't want sprinklers in not only those buildings but in residential buildings. It's a big issue," said Pat Burke, the province's fire marshal."

Yesterday, Minister Phillips said, "We take the advice very much of the fire marshal and the fire code."

Why is this minister not taking the fire marshal's advice? Why is he not legislating mandatory sprinkler systems in all retirement homes in Ontario?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I'd refer this to the minister responsible for the fire code, the community safety minister.



**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I really want to make sure that everyone in Ontario understands: We haven't shut the door on any option, and for anyone to suggest that the door is closed is in fact to give information that isn't perfectly accurate. We continue to ask the fire marshal for advice. We take that advice very, very seriously. We weigh that advice, as we weigh the advice from our other fire partners.

1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** In that same Toronto article, the home's owner said that the retirement home did not have sprinklers but had recently passed a fire inspection. It apparently had all the necessary equipment to prevent serious injury and death, but without a sprinkler system, two died; eight were seriously injured.

In the same article: "The fire marshal's office is putting together a review of the government's response to the Meadowcroft inquiry. He was unable to comment on his findings, but said he hopes to send them to Rick Bartolucci, Ontario Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, by month-end." That was last year.

It's very clear that the Ontario fire marshal supports mandatory sprinkler systems in all retirement homes. Will the minister, right now, on the record, tell us the official recommendation from the Ontario fire marshal to the government regarding mandatory sprinklers in retirement homes, and is the minister going to follow his recommendations?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** We take the advice of our fire partners very, very seriously. We look forward to that advice not only on sprinklers, but on a variety of ways that we can educate the public with regard to fire safety.

I think the member knows full well—the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association issued a letter suggesting that we shouldn't place false hope in any one particular initiative.

I think it's very important. The advice I've asked the fire marshal to give me is how we can ensure that there is a total package so that we can best educate the public with regard to fire safety.

#### AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, it has been a tough year for farmers. Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers have had a number of challenges, such as the rising dollar, which has also impacted our processing sector.

Minister, a recently released report called the Fifteen-Year Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Ontario Apple, Tender Fruit and Fresh Grape Industry consists of a dozen studies commissioned by the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre which examined the strengths and weaknesses of the province's fruit producers.

Could the minister please tell this House more about the strategic plan that was released and some of the

recommendations that may benefit farmers in my riding as well as across Ontario?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I want to thank the member from Northumberland—Quinte West. He certainly is a strong advocate for agriculture. It really is my pleasure to answer this question.

I want to say that I applaud the apple, tender fruit and fresh grape industry for developing their 15-year strategy. Having a long-term vision and a plan to get there will be their key to success.

Three key themes were identified for the industry strategy, and I want to cover them off, as follows: the industry should increase focus on the end consumer; the industry needs to improve quality and value chain performance; and innovation needs to be emphasized across the industry.

The plan sets out an objective of thriving in the domestic and global markets. These themes resonate with our Open Ontario plan and with our Premier's agriculture summit.

I look forward to the supplementary to add—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Minister, as you mentioned, one of the key themes in this comprehensive strategy discussion is having the industry focus on the end consumer, such as giving consumers more organic, affordable fruit, a greater fruit variety and improved marketing.

I know that your ministry has been working hard to promote the importance of buying local and to encourage both the public and the retailers to realize the benefits of buy-local initiatives.

We know that the strategies to promote Ontario food will help drive local sales and all the benefits that go along with that, including a stronger agri-food sector. Partnerships along the value chain between local producers, processors and grocers are crucial to ensure that the demand for Ontario food products is met.

Could the minister tell the members of this House more about the Buy Local strategy and what our government is doing to promote Ontario food and encourage Ontarians to buy locally?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** We do all recognize—every member in this House—that good things do grow in Ontario. The Premier's summit, held earlier this week, focused on translating consumer demand into market realities. Building a stronger value chain from farm to retail will help strengthen our agri-food industry to thrive and connect more with our consumers and develop more homegrown food products.

Through Open Ontario, we will continue to support opportunities to encourage Ontarians to buy local and we will help our agri-food sector seek new markets for Ontario-grown produce. The McGuinty government has invested over \$65 million in programming to support Ontario foods, and we are committed to adding an additional \$40 million over the next two years. When you buy Ontario, everyone wins.



## LABOUR UNIONS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is for the Minister of Labour. This week, my office received a letter from Arc Electrical in Ottawa. This business has been under siege by the IBEW and the Ontario Labour Relations Board during the last year.

The McGuinty Liberals support union tactics that promote collusion and are illegal in other jurisdictions, including the practice of salting, where union organizers infiltrate companies, even against the will of employees.

Arc Electrical is not alone. The same is happening to firms all across Ontario, firms like Abacus, and Blenheim Electric.

Minister, your policies are costing us jobs and destroying businesses. Did union donations to your party buy these unfair labour laws?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I remind the member of impugning motive and would ask him to withdraw that comment, please.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I thought the member, with his time out from this chamber, would have learned something during that time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I remind the honourable member that we do not make references to people's presence or absence in this place for whatever reason they may or may not be here. I would just ask that you be conscious of that and that we not direct our comments personally to one another in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

Minister?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I understand, Mr. Speaker. I was speaking to the learning of what's going on in our province. What's going on in our province is we have the best labour relations that we have had in the last 30 years.

We understand—and it's because our employers, our labour groups, our employees have come together to work together and understand that we have challenges before our province. We have experienced the worst recession that this province and the globe has experienced since the Great Depression. Because of that, our labour groups, our employers have come together to get the job done, to get moving, get Ontario moving forward with an Open for Business plan that we have—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I've learned a lot about this Liberal government for quite some time.

To the Minister of Labour: Your government allows stripping and market equalization funds, tactics that have only one goal—the destruction of small, non-union businesses.

The owner of Arc Electrical was chased out of business by your union friends in the IBEW. Six good employees lost their jobs, and he now teaches at Algonquin College. He told me that union intimidation and campaigning is now common practice on our college campuses as well.

Does this government support intimidation of students as well as employers? Or is your idea of Open Ontario closing the doors on all employers and workers alike?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** What this government is fighting for is fair, balanced labour relations. That's what we have brought to this province: restored labour relations.

And yes, when businesses look to locate, they look for places that have stable labour relations. That's what we have here in Ontario. Our Open for Business plan is attracting business and we are working with our partners. When I say "partners" to the member, I mean all partners. I mean employers, labour groups, employees. We are all in this together, I say to the member. The member needs to understand that. This isn't about dividing groups. This is about moving Ontario forward, and that's what Open Ontario is all about.

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## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Minister of Health. This morning, Torontonians learned that one of their most cherished hospitals is cutting staff. The Service Employees International Union was told that at least 25 front-line positions at Women's College Hospital are being axed. These employees keep the hospital running. They keep it clean and they ensure that patient care does not suffer. How can the minister justify these cuts as hospital CEO salaries continue to skyrocket and her government hands out billions of dollars in more corporate tax cuts?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I appreciate the question. I do understand that Women's College is constructing a new state-of-the-art building and, as part of the project, they're moving the final Sunnybrook programs back over to the Sunnybrook campus. Many of those positions are administration and management positions that may be able to move with the programs to Sunnybrook.

There are 3.1 FTEs that are nursing positions. However, 1.5 of these are vacant positions. We're talking about fewer than two nurses who are affected by this. We have 10,000 more nurses working in Ontario today than we did in 2003 and we continue to increase the role of nurses in this province. These changes are being put in place to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** If the minister listened to the question, she'd know I'm not talking about nursing positions; I'm talking about SEIU employees. These are workers in maintenance, people who do the cleanliness work that keeps those MRSA-type bugs away from hospitals. These are very important workers, and yet this is another cut in a long list of hospital cuts that we've been seeing across the province. Communities everywhere are realizing that they might actually be the next in line to lose local hospital services.

In Toronto, Toronto East General, St. Michael's, St. Joseph's and now Women's College are all coping with



cuts. Across the province, hospital services have been cut in Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Seaforth, Northumberland, Burk's Falls and Cobourg. The list goes on and on. The question is this: Will the minister tell us how many more hospitals will be forced to make cuts in the time coming?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Again, I welcome the opportunity to talk about Women's College and I urge members who are concerned to actually make sure they understand that these changes—and they are changes—will not affect patient care. They will not impact services provided to the patients who turn to Women's College for their health care.

These changes are being put in place to become more effective. That's the important thing here. In health care we all have to be open to the kind of changes that will allow us to maintain a very high level of health care in this province. We've been very supportive of Women's College since the demerger with Sunnybrook. We've increased funding by almost 40%. We will continue to support Women's College Hospital. They play a very important—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question today is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As you are aware, the recent economic downturn has had an effect on all Ontarians. I've heard many stories, from Welland to Toronto to Sudbury, including accounts from my own constituents who have been struggling through these tough times. The truth is, we're all facing difficult times.

I understand that the government has introduced many initiatives to help Ontarians in need, and one in particular is the poverty reduction strategy. This strategy is an important tool created to help Ontarians by providing long-term support needed.

In Scarborough–Rouge River and Toronto, affordable housing and rent supplements play an important role in the poverty reduction strategy. I'm hoping the minister would be able to provide the House with an update on these programs.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The question does touch on a serious problem that we have around the world, and certainly we're not exempt in Ontario, and that's the one of poverty. We are attacking that, however, head-on. To date, we have committed to creating and repairing at least 76,500 housing units across Ontario. In addition, the 2009 Ontario budget made permanent \$5 million annually to ensure stable funding for municipal rent banks across Ontario.

We're delivering close to 35,000 rent supplements to help make rent more affordable for low-income Ontario families. Rent banks have helped 23,000 families avoid evictions so far this year. On average, this means keeping 330 families in their homes every month.

The McGuinty government is committed to the first Ontario long-term affordable housing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Minister, I'm pleased that this government has decided to tackle this serious problem of poverty in Ontario. Your ministry is providing Ontarians with a very important service, and I ask that this service continue well into the future. I will be sure to take this information back to my constituents.

This year's budget recognizes health, education and economic development as key priorities for the government and laid out a plan to eliminate the provincial deficit by 2017.

The minister comments on the substantial commitments by this government in the affordable housing sector, but there is no mention of new funding for social housing renovation and affordable housing development in the 2010 provincial budget. I'm hoping the minister would be able to address the budget and how it will affect his ministry and, most importantly, the people in my riding and all Ontarians.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm pleased to inform the member that while the economic circumstances are challenging at this time and they've pinched our financial situation, our investment in much-needed affordable housing remains unchanged.

In 2009, the province, together with our federal partners, committed to investing \$1.2 billion over two years in affordable housing. This means that the second half of the affordable housing funding is being rolled out this year. That's more than \$600 million in funding for Ontario families in need.

Today, we're continuing to invest in housing through \$100 million for the 2008 budget, which has seen more than 62,000 units repaired; \$127 million for the DOOR program, to help create and repair affordable housing; and \$80.24 million for off-reserve aboriginal housing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and it concerns—I wrote the Premier and the minister back in January, and I can't believe you haven't changed this program. The program I'm referring to—honourable members may not know this: The Liberals have a three-year program for apple growers that subsidizes by 50% the purchase price of new, petroleum-based, plastic, American-made apple harvest bins, but they won't level the playing field and subsidize the 100% Canadian-made wooden bins that have been used for centuries by apple growers.

I ask the minister, is this what you and the Premier mean by Open Ontario, that it's open to Americans but closed to Ontario businesses?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Thank you very much for the question, and I really do appreciate the question.

I want to clarify just a few things. In fact, for the sourcing of the bins, it's entirely up to the business. The



decision is made entirely by the operator of the business. If they choose to buy American or they choose to buy Canadian, that is strictly up to the business.

We have provided funding, and that is through the food safety and traceability, and the apple growers have found that the plastic bins are easier to clean and certainly much easier to work with for storage of their apples. That is why they're moving away from the wooden bins.

But if they choose to move to either keep the wood or move to the plastic, that's up to them. That's a business decision that they make.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Minister, that's ridiculous. It shows what lack of knowledge you know about business and small business. You're—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I reminded an honourable member earlier about not bringing our questions or answers down to a personal level. I remind all members of that.

1130

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Well, it is rather personal when you're driving fellows like John Finch in Clarksburg out of business. He makes wooden apple bins. Farmers won't buy the bins anymore because you're subsidizing by 50% the American-made plastic bins. By the way, plastic's not a renewable resource, the last time I looked, and good Canadian wood is. It's better for the environment. They've used them for centuries.

I got a form letter back from your ministry that made no sense. In my 20 years here, I—either you guys are stubborn, or you don't know what you're doing. The fact of the matter is, farmers don't have a choice now. If they want to be part of the program, they have to buy American-made plastic bins. Is this what you call Open Ontario?

I ask you again, why don't you level—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I've got to tell you, to take lectures from that side of the House, when I come from a small business background and he doesn't, I think is actually quite laughable.

But I want to make it perfectly clear in my answer: The decision is up to the farmer. It's up to the farmer.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members, it is Thursday.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not helpful, member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not helpful, either, Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Minister?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** One of the things that I wanted to further speak about—and it is an opportunity for me to talk about this—is the understanding of agriculture from this side versus that side. There have been some—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock, please. I try extremely hard to be patient, and I try to be the referee who does not lose his cool, and I'm biting my tongue. But to start making allegations of who's smarter and who's not smarter when it comes to a particular sector, an important sector in our province, is not helpful. I trust that each member—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Simcoe-Grey, that's not helpful, either.

I think it's important for members to recognize that when the Speaker is standing, they should be listening to what the Speaker has to say. It is important work, what we do in this House, what I do and what you do as opposition and as government. You can criticize a program, you can criticize initiatives, but let's not bring it to a personal level.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier. The Massey Centre in my riding provides residence and support to the most vulnerable: teen moms and their babies. It provides daycare; it provides a parent-child centre. This centre has not had an increase in its provincial funding in years. In the next day or so, this centre may be on strike. Those teen moms won't have the support that they need. The parents whose jobs depend on that daycare centre won't have the support. The parents and children who come in to the early years centre won't have that early years centre.

Will your government immediately sit down with the management of that centre and help them resolve the ongoing financial problems they face because of a lack of increases over the last number of years?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to recognize and acknowledge the good work done by the Massey Centre, an important organization here in the city of Toronto that has done work helping teen mothers find a better pathway for them and their children.

Our government has worked hard over the last number of years to make sure that we continue to put additional services in place to help those moms. Those are the very moms who will benefit from the Ontario child benefit. I was in my home community this morning talking about the importance of that benefit to mothers to be able to find a better footing for them and their children.

I know that the Minister of Labour will look forward to speaking in the supplementary to the specific issues associated with the labour dispute. But suffice it to say that we are very supportive of the work that has been done for many years by the Massey Centre. I invite any organization like that to meet with me, and I—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?



**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I'm pleased that the minister recognizes the good work of the Massey Centre. That's a step forward. My hope would be that the recognition of good work and the critical nature of that work would be recognized not just in words here, but in money on the table to make sure that that good work can go forward and the workers at that centre can be paid decently.

Minister, the clients, the parents, the workers and the administration face conflict and disruption within the next 48 hours. Will you act now to help them deal with their financial problems so they can resolve this conflict?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** To the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I thank the member for the question. As the member has heard from the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the Massey Centre is very important to our community, as are all our centres that provide these social services. This work in our communities is vital.

When it comes to labour relations, at times, they can be difficult, but at the Ministry of Labour, we are there to assist. We're there to assist with our mediators and our conciliators to help the parties as they resolve their differences and whatever disputes that they may have between each other to find a way to move forward. That's how we help them.

We all know the great work that gets done in the community. We want to continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### ANTI-SMOKING PROGRAMS

**Mr. Bob Chiarelli:** My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. Minister, this past Monday, the Canadian Medical Association Journal published research from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences. This shows that a smoking ban implemented in Toronto restaurants in 2001 corresponds with a decrease in hospital admissions for cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, specifically, heart attacks, angina, stroke and respiratory conditions, including asthma, emphysema and pneumonia or bronchitis. This study is a helpful tool in furthering the health promotion agenda, and clearly shows that preventive action is paying health dividends.

Minister, how has the government supported Ontarians and municipalities to reduce exposure to smoke?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I want to take this opportunity to thank the member from Ottawa West—Nepean for the question and also to publicly welcome him to the Legislature.

The ICES study is an important one that has garnered much positive attention. A report on the consequences of smoking is especially timely as this month is cancer prevention month. The report is significant because it identifies smoke-free legislation as a key contributor to reductions of hospital admissions for cardiovascular and respiratory conditions. This is in fact good news. These numbers prove the value of having a comprehensive smoke-free regime.

Due to the long-known dangers of second-hand smoke, this government acted boldly and brought forth the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which has built upon the good work done by municipalities by creating one of the most comprehensive province-wide tobacco strategies in North America.

This government will continue to address the very important issue of protecting Ontarians from tobacco-related illnesses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.*

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Dalton McGuinty has launched an assault on community pharmacies. The Liberal government's changes represent a serious cut to front-line health care services, particularly in rural and small-town Ontario. This is an attack on the viability of rural pharmacies and the availability of pharmacy services in my riding of Simcoe—Grey.

For the past six years, Ontarians have paid \$15 billion in the Liberal health tax, yet they are receiving less and less in return. At the same time that we uncovered the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle and huge amounts of money being wasted at local health integration networks, small-town pharmacists are being driven out of business and being told to close their doors.

In Simcoe—Grey, people are already getting the short end of the stick when it comes to public health care: doctor shortages, small hospitals and lack of transportation, just to name a few of the issues. Now Dalton McGuinty wants us to pay more and travel further to get the medication we require. This is unacceptable. I know many of our local pharmacists, and I know them to be upstanding and generous members of our communities.

Dalton McGuinty's assault on these professionals is unwarranted and unbecoming of the Premier of Ontario. I'm committed to defending rural Ontario, our small towns, our farmers, our schools and our health care. In doing so, I support our local community pharmacies and the good work that they do. If this government doesn't change course, my constituents can expect to drive further, receive less service and face new user fees.

##### MIHIR GHOSH

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Mihir Ghosh, a dear friend of the people of East York, passed away recently. Mihir had been a long-time volunteer on the board of the East York Race Relations and Multiculturalism Institute, a community group committed to promoting healthy race rela-



tions, multiculturalism and Canadian citizenship. Without the long-standing contributions of Mihir Ghosh in the last 18 years, the good work of the institute simply would not have been possible in the past, nor would it have the foundation to continue in the future. For many community members, Mihir was simply referred to as "Mr. East York Multicultural Day."

Mihir inspired and motivated others by personal involvement. He committed himself selflessly to the worthy causes of building positive relations among diverse ethnic communities, and in turn, rapport was established towards the better good of the community.

Mihir was an accomplished promoter and was able to quickly create confidence in the different volunteer service roles he had undertaken, such as his volunteering with the Leaside Lions and the South Asian Health and Heart Society.

Mihir is going to be sorely missed.

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** Our government's recent budget made an important investment for the health and well-being of our children in Ontario. We are investing \$9 million per year to support 20 children's treatment centres. In addition, we are making an investment of \$2.5 million to help 12 of these centres update their record-keeping systems. This funding will help ensure our children get the treatment they need faster and closer to home.

The Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services estimates that about 3,600 children and youth will benefit from this investment. Currently, Ontario's system serves more than 58,000 children. Some of the services they provide include physiotherapy, rehabilitation and speech-language therapy. They help children and youth with conditions such as cerebral palsy and Down syndrome to reach their full potential. They also support children with special needs, such as those with autism and learning disabilities.

Children in my riding will also benefit from this investment. I was very pleased that Minister Broten came to Chatham last week to personally deliver this good news and tour the centre.

The Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent will receive an additional \$216,000 in 2010-11. This important investment will strengthen our response and service system so that we can better serve children, youth and families with special needs.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** On March 24, I had the pleasure to meet with representatives from the YMCA. During that meeting, they expressed their concern over government Bill 242, the full-day learning bill, and the disastrous effects it will have on the not-for-profit child care programs already in place in Ontario.

The bill prohibits schools from partnering with child care programs already in existence. This will be more costly to implement and will lead to the duplication of

services. Furthermore, it will mean that those existing programs will lose many of the four- and five-year-olds, diminishing the funding that helps pay for operating costs. This, in turn, will mean higher costs for parents of children in other age groups.

With early childhood educators flocking to fill higher-paid positions in school boards, the not-for-profit child care providers will be unable to compete. As a result, children in other age groups will lose the qualified expertise of trained ECE practitioners.

The YMCA is concerned with this government's program and has laid out specific amendments for Bill 242. One of those amendments asks the Ministry of Education to allow schools to partner with the not-for-profit community providers and to partner with these providers for the delivery of extended day programs—that's before and after school—for children aged six to 12 as well.

It is my hope that the government will listen to both the concerns and suggestions of the YMCA in an effort to improve Bill 242.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Our planet is getting warmer. The impacts of climate change could be disastrous. Those who will suffer the most will be our children and grandchildren. Increasingly, it will be them that we look to for leadership.

Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with more than 150 high school students in my riding at an event I host annually, the Climate Change Challenge. This was facilitated by Mary-Lou Maisonneuve, a parent who has led the environmental support at the high school level in Orleans. The event was held at Gisèle Lalonde high school.

In addition to my own remarks, the students were addressed by Mark Leahy of ecOrleans and Omri Stern of Zerofootprint.

Ontario's Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, also gave an excellent presentation in which he clearly distinguished between natural and human causes of global warming, and clearly showed our role in making the planet warmer.

I want to thank all of those who worked very hard to make the event a success. I was stirred by the enthusiasm these young people showed. This will be the challenge of their generation, but it should also be ours.

This government has taken leadership in greening Ontario. I hope that Canada's federal government will follow our lead.

St. Peter, St. Matthew, Cairine Wilson, Gisèle Lalonde, and Louis-Riel were well represented at the event.

If the students I met with last week are any indication, they will show the leadership that our generation is so lacking.

### POLISH COMMUNITY

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I rise on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus to pay tribute to the memory of the late president



of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Lech Kaczynski, and his wife, First Lady Mrs. Maria Kaczynski, who, together with 94 of their most trusted friends and colleagues, died tragically on April 10, 2010.

On this, which is a national day of mourning in Canada, His Grace Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, will celebrate a memorial mass at St. Maximilian Kolbe church. We join with all who gather there in expressing our collective sorrow and sincere condolences, and to celebrate their great achievements on behalf of their country and its people.

This past Sunday, I had the honour of attending a wreath-laying at the Katyn monument in Toronto. And yesterday I was joined by my colleague MPP John Yakabuski at the Polish consulate to sign the book of condolences, together with many grieving members of our Polish-Canadian community.

1310

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, and on behalf of all members of the Legislature, I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to the people of Poland at this difficult time as we remember the words that inspired President Kaczynski throughout his life:

*Remarks in Polish.*

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm proud to stand and speak to the commitment that this government has made to move Ontario forward into the next phase of power generation. This government is committed to renewable energy through the initiatives outlined in the Green Energy Act. Part of this vision for Ontario is designed around creating a culture of conservation. Using less energy is the smart strategy for our economy and our environment. Energy conservation allows the province to simultaneously create green jobs, improve productivity and reduce emissions while at the same time helping Ontarians to manage their energy costs.

The Green Energy Act will continue to make energy conservation a priority in the province through establishing leading efficiency standards for households in North America and by creating new financing tools to help consumers manage costs of renewable projects, and also by setting electricity conservation targets for local utilities and helping them to deliver effective programs to households and businesses and requiring targeted conservation measures to protect low-income Ontarians from increases in energy prices.

By creating a culture of conservation through the initiatives in the Green Energy Act, we will help to steer Ontario to a greener future through renewable power generation.

## VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** National Volunteer Week is celebrated from April 18 to April 24 this year, and I would like to pay tribute to the volunteers in Etobicoke

Centre who donate their time and energy to many of our community services. This includes our local hospice, sports, recreation, cultural activities, the arts, schools and faith communities. Every year, I recognize our rich and long history of volunteering by presenting community recognition awards to people who have been nominated by friends and colleagues and who have truly made a difference.

The 2009 recipients are: Katy Anderson, for her work with the Parent Education Network; Mary and Fiona Campell, for their work with a local ratepayers group; Richard Graves, a competitive runner who raises funds for charity and carried the Olympic torch for us; Elisabeth Grinstead, for her work in therapeutic touch; Valentina Kuryliw, for her efforts to promote the Ukrainian cause to both Canadian Ukrainians and the broader economy; John Pomponi, the neighbour we would all like to have; Cheryl Stoneburgh, who has created Basketeers, which provides tangible support to hundreds of men and women; Margo Verdis and so many others—Mary Austin, Roy Cunningham and our 22 Division community police liaison committee for their work in building bridges between our police services and our community.

Truly, all of them make a difference. They are the heart and soul of every community, and I would like to pay tribute to each and every one of them.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Our government has long held that education as a priority for our province is something we've been striving for. We understand that a strong, publicly funded education system is vital to Ontario's prosperity and future. In our recent budget, we increased funding to school boards to \$20.2 billion for the 2010-11 school year. The funding ensures our continued progress in reducing class sizes, helping students reach higher achievement levels and raising the graduation rate. I'm sure those are things that everyone can agree are appropriate and laudable goals.

These investments are making a difference. Since our government was elected, we have seen a 13% increase in grades 3 and 6 students who met or exceeded the provincial standard on province-wide tests and an 11% increase in the student graduation rate.

But that's not all we are doing to support education in Ontario. This fall we will start rolling out the full-day learning program for four- and five-year-olds in Ontario until it is fully implemented in 2015-16. Early learning has proven to have many cognitive and social benefits later in life. Research over the years has told us this, and we will be confirming that once we've implemented the program.

These are just some of the important investments in education in our recent budget, and we will keep doing the investments to build on the progress we're making today for the future of our children tomorrow.

We thank all of the stakeholders and partners as we attempt to do the best we can to get the best out of our children for the prosperity of the province of Ontario.



## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### INCOME TAX AMENDMENT ACT (PUBLIC TRANSIT EXPENSE TAX CREDIT), 2010

### LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU (CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR DÉPENSES DE TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN)

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for a tax credit for expenses incurred in using public transit / *Projet de loi 37, Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu afin de prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour les dépenses engagées au titre des transports en commun.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Public transit is an important part of the public good for Ontario which this bill intends to promote. It encourages people to use public transit by giving them a tax credit at the discretion of the Minister of Finance to encourage the use of public transit, which is good for our environment and our quality of life.

## PETITIONS

### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

"Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

"Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people's complaints about children's aid societies' decisions; and

"Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman's office;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and

investigate complaints concerning the province's children's aid societies (CAS)."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to read this petition into the record.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas violent crime and gangs have been a problem in our communities; children require safe schools and safe streets in order to thrive;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To continue with their support of the guns and gangs program;

"To continue to recognize the importance of a strong and educated police force;

"To continue to support rehabilitation programs;

"To continue to keep education as a top priority; and

"To continue to make our streets and schools safe places to be."

I agree with this petition and will sign it and send it to the table with page Andrea.

### TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly from the riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again on July 1, 2010 with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy and use every day," and a few examples include coffee, magazines, newspapers, gas for the car, home heating oil, electricity, Internet service, haircuts, dry cleaning, personal grooming, home renovations, home care services, veterinary care, pet care, legal services, the sale and resale of homes, and funeral arrangements; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election"—however, we all recall that in 2004 he brought in the dreaded health tax, which costs upward of \$600 to \$900 per individual, and now he's raising taxes again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on ... hard-working families and businesses" in the province of Ontario.

I am pleased to present this to Avery, who is the page from my riding of Durham.



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### ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the health of the First Nations youth in Ontario is of growing concern;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue the partnership with the Right To Play partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation;

"To expand the Right To Play program to other First Nations communities; and

"To follow up these programs to ensure that other initiatives continue to promote the health of First Nations youth in Ontario."

I support this petition, I affix my signature and send it to the desk with page Max.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here, signed by what would appear now, from the number of times I've presented this petition, to be almost every constituent in the riding of Oxford.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty's new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$500,000; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes" on Ontario's "families."

I affix my signature, as I wholeheartedly agree with this, and I will give it to page Tara to present it to the table.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

"Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

"Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

"Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

"Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

"Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers."

I attach my signature to it and I will pass it Georgina.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the health and well-being of the people of Ontario should be a priority for government; and

"Whereas wind farms are being considered by the McGuinty government throughout Ontario, even though there are no independent, science-based studies on the health effects of wind turbines and their transmission systems; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government is forcing municipalities to build these turbines without any local say or local approval; and

"Whereas over 50 municipal councils in Ontario have voted to ask the McGuinty government to place a moratorium on new wind developments;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop all new wind developments until it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the health, safety and environmental impacts of wind turbines have been addressed and satisfied."

I agree with this petition and I'm going to sign it.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario"—it's from Cairine Wilson, and three of the kids who signed it are Kevin Munro, Kaytie Picard and Eric Backstrom.

"Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring 'abrupt and

irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;’ and

“Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

“Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

“Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

“Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208,” or presently as Bill 6, “An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

I will sign this petition as I agree with it, and I will send it up to the desk with Owen.

#### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m pleased to present a petition from my riding of Durham which reads as follows:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario....

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

“Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

“Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people’s complaints about children’s aid societies’ decisions; and

“Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman’s office;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the members of the provincial Parliament of Ontario to enact legislation in support of the Ombudsman of Ontario to have the power to probe decisions and investigate complaints concerning the province’s children’s aid societies (CAS).”

I sign this in support of vulnerable children in the province of Ontario.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a unique opportunity to develop the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario and the Legislative Assembly [should] ensure that this valuable resource is

used to advantage all Ontarians while respecting the environment and rights of the First Nations people;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To develop the natural resources in the Ring of Fire for economic benefit for Ontario;

“To ensure that the development of the Ring of Fire does so only within the guidelines of an EPA report;

“To respect the rights of the First Nations people and communities; and

“To work with local industry to bring employment to northern Ontario communities.”

I have signed this petition, and I hand it to page Andrew.

#### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have here a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of people in Port Elgin. I believe that’s in the riding of Huron–Bruce, but they asked me on their behalf to present it in the Legislature.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

“Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

“Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people’s complaints about children’s aid societies’ decisions; and

“Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman’s office;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and investigate complaints concerning the province’s children’s aid societies (CAS).”

I will affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the people of Ontario expect its Legislature to be a model of decorum and respect; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario expect members of the Legislature to conduct themselves”—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is that stamped?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** No, it’s not. I apologize.

#### CHANGEMENT DE CLIMAT

**M. Phil McNeely:** J’ai une pétition à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario. Ça vient de l’École secondaire



publique Gisèle-Lalonde. Elle est signée par Katrina Legault, Gabrielle Savoie, Mafouze Al-Sharrife et d'autres.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que dans son rapport de 2007, le Groupe d'experts intergouvernemental sur l'évolution du climat des Nations Unies a conclu que, sans des réductions dramatiques au niveau des émissions de dioxyde de carbone imputables à des activités humaines, les changements climatiques pourraient avoir des « effets soudains et irréversibles sur les océans, les glaciers, les terres, les littoraux et les espèces »; et

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« Attendu qu'aucun groupe, pays ou continent n'assume la responsabilité des changements climatiques mais que tous les êtres humains sont collectivement responsables d'y apporter une solution; et

« Attendu que la production de gaz à effet de serre a augmenté de 27 % au-dessus des niveaux de 1990 au Canada; et

« Attendu que nos chefs élus ont la responsabilité de rendre compte aux membres du public de leurs gestes pour enrayer la problématique des changements climatiques par égard pour la redevabilité; et

« Attendu que les jeunes en particulier, héritiers éventuels de cette Terre, notre seul demeure, démontrent un intérêt spécial pour cette question;

« Nous, les soussignés, adressons une pétition à l'Assemblée législative pour demander que l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario adopte rapidement le projet de loi 208, la Loi sur la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques. »

J'envoie cette pétition avec Kate. Merci.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AUX CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES

Mr. McNeely moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to increase awareness of climate change / Projet de loi 6, Loi visant à augmenter la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Some 55 million years ago, our planet grew warmer. We don't know for sure what caused it, but we do know the results: global temperatures rose an average of six degrees; ice melted; oceans rose; entire islands were swept under the sea; and this was the last mass-extinction event in our planet's history,

all because of a rise in temperature of six degrees. That happened, according to the scientists, over a period of 20,000 years.

Scientists say we might see the same six-degree rise in the next 90 years. If thousands of species died because of climate change over the course of 20,000 years, how many more will die as our planet warms at a rate 200 times faster?

While we may not know what caused our planet's climate to change 55 million years ago, this time scientists are nearly unanimous. This time the culprit is clear: It is us. That means it's our responsibility to fix it, and it won't be easy. It will take political wisdom and courage.

The legislation we are debating today is a small call for action. This private member's bill, if passed, would name April 21, the day before Earth Day, Climate Change Awareness Day. But it would also ask the Minister of the Environment to produce a report card illustrating indicators of climate change. I have produced one for 2009, and this is just a report that tells it as it is. The report would be similar to the one that I have produced. It would be delivered to students across our province in grades 5 through 12 by the Minister of Education, and all that material is already available through our ministries.

This might seem like a small thing, but great things have small beginnings. By naming April 21 Climate Change Awareness Day, we would be setting aside a day of the year to consider the causes and consequences of climate change and to confront our own role in that climate change.

Our polluting industries and polluting activities emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. At the same time, deforestation blackens the lungs of the planet, making it less capable of recycling carbon dioxide into clean air. Increased concentrations of these gases in our atmosphere trap the sun's heat.

Temperature increases are concentrated at the poles. Thirty years ago, Arctic ice, at its smallest annual extent, covered an area the size of Canada. Today it's the size of Canada less the area of Quebec. Quite a bit of the ice is already gone—the summer ice. Thirty years from now, there may be nothing left, and it may happen faster than that.

As the Arctic's reflective ice melts, more and more blue ocean water absorbs heat, accelerating global temperature change. The ice reflects about 80% of the energy from the sun; the water will absorb about 80% of the energy, so it's a complete reversal, and global warming will accelerate. This is the most vicious of vicious circles.

Consider the concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. For tens of thousands of years, it was at about 285 parts per million. In 1776, James Watt installed the first modern coal-fired steam engine. As more and more coal was shovelled into more and more furnaces, our atmosphere grew more and more clogged with CO<sub>2</sub>. As time went on, the change grew faster. By 1930, we hit 300 parts per million. In 1950, it was 310. In the 1980s, we surpassed 350 parts per million, which



many experts called a safe and more stable limit. Today, we're at 387 parts per million of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. We'll hit 400 in as little as five years, and we may reach 450 in 20 years. Many scientists consider that to be catastrophic.

What does it mean? It would mean large portions of our oceans become dead zones. It would mean mountain glaciers vanishing and many other ecosystems at risk. It could mean we've reached a tipping point beyond which the Antarctic and Greenland ice shelves melt and oceans rise. Even a one-metre rise could leave half a billion people homeless. But it's the things we haven't thought of that might end up being the most disastrous.

This is a man-made catastrophe, and it's one that can be stopped. We must carry on the fight every day of the year, but by designating April 21 Climate Change Awareness Day, we would give concerned Ontarians a date to rally around. It would be a time for ordinary Ontarians and community leaders to put their heads together and come up with solutions. Great things have small beginnings.

This legislation, if passed, would also, as I've mentioned, produce an annual report card on indicators of climate change, distributed to all students in grades 5 through 12. It is this younger generation and the generations to come who will be the most profoundly affected by climate change. We must do what we can to lay the groundwork for them. In return, they must hold us accountable, and this would help. It would be nice for our kids to be seeing our report cards.

The report would measure the amounts of greenhouse gases being produced globally, being produced by Canada and being produced by Ontario. This would be from each year since 1990, the Kyoto year. It would report on the amount of carbon dioxide already in our atmosphere. It would rank the 10 highest-polluting countries on a per capita basis, a list I'm afraid Canada figures prominently on. We're up there with Australia and with the United States as the worst polluters on an individual basis. It would indicate the lowest annual level of the Arctic sea ice, and it would show any new species added to Ontario and Canada's list of species at risk. Finally, it would track polar bear populations in Canada, along with any other indicators the Minister of the Environment feels are relevant.

Collecting all this information in one place would allow students to get an overall picture of the health of our global environment. More importantly, it would allow students to hold their political leaders' feet to the fire. It will take political wisdom and courage because there are costs to fighting climate change, and those costs can't be ignored.

A recent report sponsored by TD Economics and based on the analysis of M.K. Jaccard and Associates, suggests that aggressive policies such as carbon pricing and emissions regulations might leave Canada's economy between 1.5% to 3.2% below what it would otherwise be by 2020. That's over 10 years. Canada's growth rate might slow from about 2.4% per annum to

between 2.1% and 2.3% per annum, but that small loss is offset by so much gain. The longer we wait to take action, as Paul Krugman says, the more expensive a solution will be. If we attempt none, the damage to our economy and our entire planet will be vastly greater than that caused by a 0.1% slowdown in economic growth.

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Business as usual is not just unsustainable, it is unfair. Greedy polluters like big oil, big auto and big consumption are pushing the cost of doing business on the rest of us. The dire costs of climate change are not showing up on their balance sheet and not showing up in the price of their products, giving them an unfair advantage over environmentally responsible business.

Greenwashing also leads customers astray. This is a strategy used to downplay negative impacts of corporate decisions on our environment. Clear-cutting, coal mining, oil drilling: All of these can be spun by clever PR people into things that somehow look good for our environment. Just one recent example: Shell Oil has made, and is making, large investments in the Alberta tar sands. About a month ago, they took out a full-page ad in the *Ottawa Citizen* and sang their own praises about protecting the Athabasca River and the boreal forest. But nowhere in the ad did they mention the 29.5 million tonnes of greenhouse gases released into the air at the Alberta tar sands every single year. Nowhere did they mention the huge costs this incurs; costs that are being transferred to our children.

Let's make corporations pay what they owe. Let's make them pay for the destruction they cause. Let's reward companies that are really environmentally responsible, and the same goes for governments. Jaccard's report suggests that Ontario's economy will grow at a faster rate the more aggressively climate change is pursued. This is because of the province's many non-polluting industries. This is also because of the government's commitment to going green.

As climate change forces the world economy to transform, Ontario is in a fantastic position to reap the rewards. We have invested millions in green energy, and we've committed to reducing greenhouse gas production below 1990 levels: 6% below by 2014, 15% below by 2020 and 80% below by 2050. We are closing Ontario's coal-fired generating stations, our province's biggest polluter, by 2014. This will reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> production by 30 million tonnes annually. Too bad that reduction is being matched by the annual pollution I mentioned from the Alberta tar sands.

The fact is that our federal government has not shown the kind of leadership our provincial government has in combatting climate change. It has not shown the kind of leadership we so desperately need. Our federal government blocked meaningful change at the 2009 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen. Our Prime Minister and our country won the most Fossil awards of any nation in the run-up to that convention, honouring Canada's dirty and destructive impact on our planet's climate.



Canada's greenhouse gas emissions have increased 27% since the Kyoto base year of 1990, and according to Environment Canada, we're now 33.8% above our Kyoto commitment. There's no surprise when our current Prime Minister said in 2002: "We will oppose ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and its targets. We will work with the provinces and others to discourage implementation of those targets. And we will rescind the targets when we have the opportunity to do so."

As recently as three weeks ago, this was repeated by Mr. Paradis. He's going to leave climate change to the provinces.

We cannot afford such myopic leadership. The sacrifices we need to make will demand political wisdom and political courage. We must prepare the next generation to take the steps we don't have the wisdom or courage to take ourselves. It's a call to action. Our young citizens must know that things can change. With our help, they can do better; with their help, we can do better; and with small beginnings there may yet be time to do great things to grow.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Actually, it wasn't too long ago—just before Christmas—that we debated, I'm assuming, the identical bill, the Climate Change Awareness Act, and I don't think much has changed as far as the proposed legislation is concerned. Our position hasn't changed on this as well, although there have been some developments since Copenhagen.

I give the member credit: At least he's talking about the climate change issue. His government doesn't seem to want to talk about it anymore. We've really heard nothing from this government since the cap-and-trade legislation was passed. So again, we're not hearing much from the government on this issue, and I'm not sure what's going on there.

One thing that has been pointed out by our Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller—I hope that was not a career-limiting move on his behalf. He pointed out that the province of Ontario is nowhere near meeting its emission reduction targets. Other than Mr. McNeely, perhaps the members opposite just kind of shrug their shoulders on that one.

A cynic may question why one would set those kinds of emission target reductions in the first place if you're not prepared to meet them. A cynic may suggest that some of these initiatives do oftentimes look good on the 6 o'clock news; I do give you credit for that. But we do need a bit more substance. One cannot just continue to merely talk about this issue and strive to acquire those green-friendly headlines.

With respect to this bill, it's an awareness bill. What's wrong with publicizing climate change awareness? My concern is, we get caught up in the talk. There are no concrete measures from this government. You're not part of the three or four other provinces and the federal government that have moved forward on carbon dioxide

capture and sequestration, for example. You're not putting any money into it.

In calling for this Climate Change Awareness Day—and I've done this before—I question to what extent we need yet another environmental day designation. Many years ago—it would be the early 1970s—Earth Day: Now, that just knocked it out of the ballpark. That did very well and continues to garner attention right around the planet. I'm just concerned that if you add yet another day, if it's overkill, at best you are essentially diluting the message, perhaps confusing the message, and, in the end, losing some of the impact with respect to—certainly the impact of previously designated days could lose their importance. How many of these days can we fit into a week?

Much like Copenhagen, where the issue of climate change obviously was front and centre on the international stage—people came from around the world. It's a global issue, it requires a global solution. To what extent are we limited, as a provincial jurisdiction, to the same extent that a state in Brazil would maybe be limited in any impact that they would have as well, operating on their own? We do know that Mr. McGuinty sent his Minister of the Environment to Copenhagen and he ended up bad-mouthing Canada on the international stage. That's the kind of publicity we don't need. I am glad that Mr. McGuinty did not send John Gerretsen to Vancouver to embarrass us at the Olympics. But beyond that, we do know that Copenhagen, in many views, has been seen as a failure. It did not lead to a meaningful accord where any direct action was taken. Some of the dates that were set have been delayed by both the developing countries and the developed world. There was a lot of talking, yet again.

There has been talking about this issue since the early 1950s. I have a Globe and Mail article from 1951 or 1952 that talks about global warming. We've been talking about it since the very early 1950s. We continue today.

The developed world: A number of those countries did set reduction targets at Copenhagen. Before the United Nations, they set January 31 as a date, as did some of the developing nations. However, only about a week afterwards, both India and China reversed their positions. UN officials subsequently postponed that deadline. That deadline has been postponed indefinitely. Negotiators failed to make any real movement towards emission reduction targets. Frankly, I think in setting those kinds of hurdles other minds come into play with respect to the economic impact and the realization that in many ways, in different forms, this is essentially a tax on the citizens of whichever jurisdiction goes forward on this locally to try and deal with a global problem. And how many countries are willing to sacrifice the basic living standards of their citizens to attempt to solve a global problem?

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Another real concern for Canada: There are two US cap-and-trade bills before the US jurisdiction. These will result in the imposition of tariffs, levies, fees or



restrictions with respect to the border to protect their own trade-exposed industry. This is the kind of thing we hear a lot these days from the Obama administration, and those countries that are out of sync with the United States will pay the price.

So it's not hard to see why, since Copenhagen, national leaders have been reticent to talk about this. I think it's in today's Toronto Sun that Lorrie Goldstein makes reference to this as the mother of all tax hikes: "Pricing carbon dioxide emissions, whether through a carbon tax or cap-and-trade market, means creating a new national sales tax"—another, as he describes it, "tax on everything," a new GST.

Again, that's of concern. We're in the midst of the HST debate presently in Ontario, again on the heels of Mr. McGuinty's \$15-billion—to date—so-called health tax. Despite all of this, the talk continues, the ongoing discussion with respect to a global emission pricing plan. I'm not sure if it was Goldstein—I have a quote here from James Kanter. I think this was last Sunday's New York times, and I'll read the quote with respect to emissions trading. We are "on the cusp of generating mammoth amounts of money for governments—money that could start flowing just in time to help nations emerge from the worst financial crisis in a generation.

"The prospect of those earnings is one of the key reasons that nations are determined to stick by carbon trading, despite the setbacks and scandals."

In the meantime, there's another statement—I think this was in a Fraser Institute document. The environmental law group of Blake, Cassels and Graydon noted "a continuing patchwork of regulatory initiatives at the provincial and regional levels, resulting in the need for companies to comply with competing regulatory requirements." We've seen that over seven years and perhaps—I'm losing count—seven environmental bills, legislation that's been passed by the present government. It does have a cumulative effect.

This kind of regulatory competition was discussed in Copenhagen. The Premiers of Quebec, British Columbia, Manitoba and Nova Scotia were in attendance, not the Premier of Ontario. As I mentioned, Ontario's environment minister was there, and the mayors of Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary. Yet again, lots of talk, not much in the way of action.

There's no question that the member opposite's heart is in the right place. Unlike his government, he's certainly, as we are now well into the new year, again more than willing to continue to talk about this. I'm just concerned that a Climate Change Awareness Act—designation, report cards—somewhat misses the mark. Money resources would be required for additional report cards. I don't know whether kids and their parents want more report cards. I'm just not convinced on any discernible impact of these kinds of initiatives. Advocating for report cards is also important, and that's obviously an awareness tool. I think it's important to continue to let people in this country know—I think of steelworkers in my area—of the cost and the impact on manufacturing, on

industry and on agri-business; the impact on the steel industry. I have a steel mill right next to a major coal plant. I think you made mention of shutting down the coal plants. I'm just not sure how many windmills it would take to run that gigantic steel mill down in my riding.

Let's have a report card with respect to documenting, as requested by Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller. Let's document the failure of this government to meet its own greenhouse gas target standards. That would be worth a report card on its own.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the opportunity to address this bill. I want to thank the member for raising the issue and bringing it back to the floor of the Legislature. It isn't often—I wish it was more frequent—that we have the opportunity to talk about climate change and talk about the issues that it brings with it; talk about the opportunities that are out there to address climate change; and talk about the opportunities: environmental, economic and social. That's before us today.

The Liberal government—Dalton McGuinty—has much to answer for on this file. Awareness is a good thing. My hope is that more students are aware of the state of the world, and the consequences for them and their future if action is not taken on climate change. But I have to say, Speaker—and you will know, as a member of this House—that if you actually look at the climate plan that was brought forward by the McGuinty government—one that does not have any costing in it, so we don't know what the measures will be—frankly, that's a big difference from the plan put forward by the province of Quebec, which actually has a budget annually for the measures that it's going to take to deal with climate change.

If you look at the report that was brought forward by the Minister of the Environment just before Christmas, that report—and it was a very glossy report; it was a very good-looking report—had a very powerful message, and that's that this government will not meet its climate change targets. You could go through and see smiling pictures of the minister. I think there were a lot of pictures of greenery in that report. But the numbers told a very grim story, and that's that this government was not going to meet its targets based on the plan that was presented.

Frankly, those targets don't even meet the weak standard that was set in the Kyoto Protocol. I will say it's a weak standard because, having gone to attend the negotiations at the session in Bonn and having talked to climate scientists, everyone recognized that what was being put forward in the Kyoto Protocol was the absolute minimum. It was the basement. It was the lowest common denominator. The hope was that we could at least meet that. Frankly, as the member who had put forward the bill knows, when we're talking about 2020, increasingly the talk is of cuts to greenhouse gas emissions in the 20% to 40% range. This government's plan is a 15% cut. That is



inadequate. But piled on top of that inadequacy is the reality that there is no plan in place to meet even those weak and inadequate targets. That's of consequence.

When the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario looked at the plan, noted that it wasn't going to meet its targets and noted that it was very vague in terms of exactly what steps would be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, one of the things he talked about was the fact that transportation was a critical issue. It is a positive thing that coal plants have been ratcheted down and may or may not be shut down. We will see. We hope they are shut down. In fact, according to the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, they could be shut down this year, given the lack of demand for electricity and the state of Ontario's electricity system. That would make sense to me. As the demand for electricity goes down, I don't know why the coal plants are being turned on. Nonetheless, they are.

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But I will go back to the Environmental Commissioner. If you want to deal with transportation, you have to deal with sprawl, you have to deal with transit, and you have to be willing to change the way we make cities happen in this province. That's not what has happened. The growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe sees 60% of the new development that is going to happen in this urban area take place on greenfields. That will be extraordinarily costly: costly in terms of new infrastructure, costly in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, and costly in terms of congestion and all the economic fallout that comes from that.

This government has not made the commitment to cut or curb sprawl in a way that would actually make a difference. That opinion is not just mine. That's the opinion of the Pembina Institute when they reviewed the plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe, of the Neptis Foundation, and, frankly, the most recent report from the Pembina Institute talking about the need to take action on sprawl and transportation.

Today, in question period, the Premier was asked how much money would be saved by cutting Transit City. It was an interesting question because, frankly, all along we've been told by the Premier that there was no cut to Transit City. But when asked how much would be saved, he said \$4 billion. Four billion dollars is the cut that was announced in the budget; \$4 billion is what he expects to save.

If this government has a climate plan that already is not meeting its targets, is counting on Transit City investment to meet part of those inadequate targets, and then further cuts or—let's be generous—delays the investment, then its ability to meet the targets that it sets is further reduced. Greenhouse gas emissions will go up. More children and more elderly people will get sick and die from air pollution, and more future generations will have to live with the greenhouse gas emissions that we pump into the atmosphere. Transportation is a big issue.

There is another issue, and that is the whole question of the transformation of our electricity system. We have seen some reduction in the burning of coal, but what

we've seen on the other hand is a very substantial investment in gas-fired peak power plants. For those not familiar with it, in midsummer, at noon, when there is the greatest demand for air conditioning, the demand for electricity goes above its base level. You can satisfy that in a variety of ways. You can make a lot of different investments, some less costly than others. This government decided to make a very costly investment that also produces very large volumes of greenhouse gases. That was a mistake. It was a policy mistake; it was an environmental mistake; it was an economic mistake. It would be much cheaper and much more effective to invest in efficiency and conservation.

The investments we've seen so far from this government on electricity show that conservation and efficiency are side issues: not central, but side issues. Instead of having them as the central strategy for dealing with electricity needs here, we've seen a focus on nukes and gas.

We get smart meters. Smart meters are to conservation and efficiency what eHealth was to electronic health records. In other words, we needed electronic health records; what we got was a project that was a mess. With smart meters, instead of investing \$500 million or \$1 billion in energy efficiency, we get an investment in meters that in most cases are not going to lead to any reduction in consumption. They will lead to an increase in cost. What that means is resistance to investment in other green opportunities. There is not infinite fiscal room. If you want to invest to save this planet and this society, if you want to put in place the green energy that we need, you can't go around wasting half a billion to a billion dollars on low-value or no-value projects. That's what we have: a government committed to nukes, to gas, and to low-value or no-value investments. That's a huge problem.

We need to recognize that this society, North America, is engaged in a clean energy race. In China, Japan and Korea, countries that are fossil fuel importers and understand the impact of that importation on their economies and their long-term security, there is large-scale investment going on in renewable energy. It's happening in western Europe, too. But right now China is rapidly approaching a level of investment in renewable power that will challenge the United States. China is spending multiples of what the United States is spending on renewable energy, and the United States is spending multiples of what we're spending here.

Often I've heard cited Al Gore, a guy for whom I have a lot of respect, talking about Ontario having an advanced program for investment in green energy. Well, the bar is pretty low in North America right now. My hope is that the Obama administration will make the investments necessary to give us a solid foundation in North America for green energy. But we, here in Ontario, are not doing what we have to do and not doing what we could do.

I'll just give you some numbers. For those who are watching this, I know you can get lost in numbers, but we



spend \$40 billion a year on energy in Ontario. About a quarter of that goes to electricity. Only about 10% of that electricity is going to be new renewable power. So out of the \$40 billion we spend on energy, only about \$1 billion will go to new green power. That's far below our potential to make the transformation, but it also means that the market we create for the manufacturing is very small compared to what you need to establish the broad range of industry and research and development to make a transformation, to make sure that we're competitors in the 21st century. If we want to take on climate change, if we want to have an economy that is actually going places, then we have to make sure that we make the strategic investment and commitment to a very different path forward. That's what we don't have.

I appreciate the fact that this bill is on the floor here for debate today. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to these issues. But I have to say that there are consequences in failing to act. There are consequences that are environmental, which were mentioned earlier; there are consequences that are economic in terms of our viability as a prosperous industrial state in the future; and there are social consequences because when you fail at the first two, you get populations that are angry, frustrated, cranky and divided. There's a broad range of future scenarios in the balance right now, and we have a government that is not putting the right weight in that balance, that is not putting the right emphasis, that is not putting the right priorities forward. I appreciate the opportunity to make people aware, but we need to go far beyond awareness.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I will be sharing my time with my colleague the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

I am pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of the residents of my riding of Richmond Hill to speak on Bill 6, An Act to increase awareness of climate change, brought forward by my friend and colleague the member from Ottawa-Orléans.

I wanted to begin by first applauding my colleague the member from Ottawa-Orléans for bringing forward this bill. It's a most significant and much-needed bill, given the environmental crisis that the world may face in the future.

Climate change has become a global issue and requires full co-operation across provinces, countries and, of course, continents. I am sure everyone in this House is familiar with the Kyoto Protocol, an agreement which was signed in 1997 by a total of 184 nations as part of an international initiative to address climate change. The agreement aimed to combat global warming by significantly reducing the member nations' greenhouse emissions. This agreement was a significant moment in our history, one that I hope will guide our society as a whole toward a more green-friendly culture.

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Here we are now in the year 2010, 13 years after the signing of the Kyoto Protocol. How much has changed?

Where are we now in Canada? I'm saddened to report that we are in no better position than we were when the agreement was signed. Our greenhouse emissions increased by 27% from 1990 to 2004, and continue to rise. Our federal government has continuously ignored their obligations and have gone as far as ignoring the private member's bill which was successfully passed by the House of Commons in February 2007, a bill which was set to ensure that Canada takes effective and timely action to meet its obligation under the Kyoto Protocol and help address the problem of global climate change. It also set for the government to prepare a climate change plan on an annual basis—again, another provision that has been ignored by our federal government. This continuous ignorance on the pressing issue of climate change must stop. We must move forward and help prepare the next generation for the challenges awaiting them.

This takes me to my next point. I would like to particularly commend the member for the attention he has brought to the importance of public education with regard to climate change. Protecting the environment by passing laws and bringing forward legislation is all well and very good, but education is the key, particularly the education of our younger generation. We have an obligation to educate our children. With the ever-increasing availability of technology, by such knowledge children can find information on any topic which they are interested in. From Google to Facebook, the new wave of information technology has given us a great tool in educating our children and the young generation.

However, it seems that the topic of climate change is not a very popular subject among our children. This must change, and I am certain it will change with the passing of this bill. The issue of climate change is a non-partisan issue. The threat is very clear and is becoming more and more present in our daily lives. I hope that everyone in this House can look past political lines and support Bill 6. We must take the threat of climate change seriously and make the necessary changes to ensure the safety and the health of future generations.

I just want to make a few comments about the numbers, basically. The Ontario annual CO<sub>2</sub> emission, or carbon dioxide emission, was increased, actually—in 1990, it was 170 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. It reached its peak in 2004 with a figure of 210 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, and then was reduced in 2010 to something around 180 million tonnes, which is back close to the amount we had in 1990. This is mainly due to the policy of our government in Ontario, where we have shut down already two coal-fired plants and we are investing in protecting the environment. Renewable energy and the Green Energy Act, which was brought forward before Christmas in 2009, are going to help us to reduce greenhouse emissions to our environment.

The atmosphere has a limited volume. The more we pump in pollutants to the environment, of course the more we create thicker, heavier pollutants, and also we are going to increase the greenhouse effects. This is an established science. There is no myth about that. Sometimes people talk and say, "Mother Nature will take care



of it." This is not true. This is not science. The science says that by polluting the environment, we are actually increasing the temperature of our planet, and this will give rise to so many problems for the future generations.

Again, I thank the member from Ottawa–Orléans for bringing this bill forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** It's my pleasure to join in the debate this afternoon, to speak on Bill 6 to the honourable member from Ottawa–Orléans, to join my colleague from Richmond Hill in the discussion and to welcome Claudine VanEvery-Albert. She's on the Six Nations Council, is also a member of the working group on financial literacy and is here today in the gallery. Thank you for joining us.

I wanted to start with a little story, a narrative perhaps. A wise man once said that narratives are what shape us and who we are, so I thought I'd share a narrative that involves my 11-year-old son, Benjamin. Benjamin came home from school the other day and said, "Mom, I have to do a project on social responsibility." So I said, "Great, Ben, what are you thinking about doing?" He kind of cocked his head to the side and said, "Well, climate change, of course, Mom." I was a little taken aback, because he's a keeper in soccer and is always concerned about the violence, the players who take the falls and stuff like that; I thought he would go into conflict in sports. He just shook his little head and said, "No, Mom, climate change. That's what we need to look at."

I said, "Can you tell me more, Ben?" He said, with passion and commitment, "We need to be able to explain what each of us can do to help climate change and deal with it." I said, "Okay, what else?" because at this point I didn't clearly know what a good answer would be to that, what each of us could do. So he said, "Each of us needs to be able to explain what will happen if we don't participate."

At that moment, it was an epiphany for me, because here was a child, a youth, looking at me, another generation, saying, "You know what, Mom, this is imperative. We must do this." Which brings me to my next point: that the youth really are the key here. The member from Ottawa–Orléans has explained this to us over and over again—and I thank him for that—that the youth need to be engaged. The member from Richmond Hill said that as well: It's an education piece. So we engage the youth. But I think this one is a little bit of a 360 in that it's the youth who are teaching us what must be done in order to deal with the issues of climate change.

Youth are adapting to new technologies every day. They're learning new ways of doing things. They're learning new ways of thinking. For heaven's sake, they have 40 applications open on their computer at once and their minds are going in all different directions dealing with it. Really, this is what it takes. This is a complicated topic. There are lots of issues involved. Certainly, Ben asks a good question: How do we do this? The member from Ottawa–Orléans today, with Bill 6, has given us a

great start in how we begin, where we begin and what it is that we need to do, so I thank you for that.

Ben is not alone, however. We have the upcoming Earth Week, where communities across Ontario are engaging in activities, neighbourhood litter cleanups, different plantings and community challenges to reduce disposal items and keep them out of landfills. As well, the McGuinty government continues to take action on this front, phasing out coal-generated electricity by 2014, which of course we know is the largest initiative in Canada to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When we're talking about air and water, we're transforming energy supply to cleaner sources, reducing air pollution and greenhouse gases and protecting our air with 59 new or updated air standards and new programs for recycling household hazardous waste. Of course, all of this is part of the bigger picture; it's part of the Open Ontario plan, which focuses on water conservation for more jobs.

I did want to focus on the preamble of this bill. I see I have just a minute to do so. In the preamble, it states that, "No single person, community, country or continent alone is responsible for the degradation of our natural environment, and no single person, community, country or continent alone can act to reverse it." In the 40 seconds that I have, I want to say that in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga in Waterloo region, last year I introduced a resolution in the House to eat local, live fresh. I was shocked when I looked at the research on the greenhouse gas emissions that we are emitting: the statistics are really quite shocking. In order to import food from where we do, within the 100-mile challenge, 72,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions were emitted, and the kilometres traveled to get the food there were over 5,000. It's shocking; it's incredible. I think it's an "aha" for all of us, an awareness.

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I thank my 11-year-old for his passion and bringing it to my attention, as well as the member from Ottawa–Orléans.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Ottawa–Orléans, Mr. McNeely, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'd like to thank the members of Kitchener–Conestoga, Richmond Hill, Haldimand–Norfolk and Toronto–Danforth for their contributions to the debate.

I would like to initially mention that Ontario is proceeding with closing coal, and 40% of the coal has been reduced already. This is a marked improvement in our environment.

**The Green Energy Act:** We've just, in the last two weeks, announced 2,500 megawatts of new power with green energy, so Ontario is a leader in this. Conservation for a 20-year period is set at 6,300 megawatts, which is about 20% of the power that we'll be using in 2025. Ontario is a leader, and an acknowledged leader, in North America in green energy. Quebec is doing very well and BC is doing very well, and other provinces, but what we



need is leadership. If we're going to meet our targets, we're going to need leadership on the federal level.

We had our cap-and-trade legislation passed last fall, and those limits of greenhouse gases are now being established for that.

I'd just like to go and talk about the reason I think it's so important that we have a report to students each year. The New Energy Future is a full-page ad in the Citizen, and it says, "A six-week Canwest special information feature on climate change, in partnership with Shell Canada." It's the type of thing that we get, an ad that the UK's Advertising Standards Authority ruled was misleading and out of order because there's nothing about the tar sands that is sustainable, so they had to bring back their ads. Well, this is the type of ad we get—we've got a full-page out. We have to get to our kids and give them the real truth. We're not getting it from our federal government when the Prime Minister says that we're a green energy superpower. We are not.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. We'll vote on Mr. McNeely's ballot item in about 100 minutes.

#### TOM LONGBOAT DAY

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should proclaim June 4 of each year Tom Longboat Day in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation. Mr. Colle.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Before I begin, I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Chief William Montour, the 54th elected chief of the Grand River. Welcome, Chief Montour of the Six Nations. I'd also like to welcome council member Ava Hill; council member Claudine VanEvery-Albert, who also helped collect petitions in support of this initiative; and Matt Jamieson, who is the director of economic development for the Six Nations. Welcome.

Also with them are a group of supporters of this initiative from the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, which is held every year along Toronto's waterfront and as part of the Canada Running Series. I would like to welcome Bonnie Taylor, Jessica Isadori, Lena Theodoru and Thomas Taylor. Thanks for being here.

Professor Bruce Kidd, who wrote a book about Tom Longboat, also would have been here, but he has another commitment. He sends his support.

I would also like to mention that my colleague here, the Minister of Labour, the Honourable Peter Fonseca, being a former marathoner himself—I think he still is—and representing Canada in the Atlanta Olympics—I think his time was 2:11, which isn't bad—is also a great supporter of this initiative and was involved with the Scotiabank marathon, which two years ago honoured the 100th year of marathoning. One of the persons honoured, Dr. Bruce Kidd, gave a dissertation on the great accomplishments of Tom Longboat at that time.

I would like to give the members here, and certainly our pages, a feel for this incredible member of the Six Nations, an incredible Canadian, an incredible athlete, Tom Longboat, who really still stands heads and shoulders above athletes even 100 years later with his incredible accomplishments. Tom Longboat is someone that's very close to my heart, being a bit of an amateur runner myself, and also I found out in my research that Tom Longboat actually lived in north Toronto for a number of years and in his retirement he worked for the city of Toronto for about 20 years. He lived on Erskine Avenue in the city of Toronto and was an outstanding member of the city of Toronto's workforce for many years, where he did very, very good work.

Perhaps no Canadian athlete has been so acclaimed, and sometimes so defamed, as Tom Longboat. The most heralded of all Canadian marathon runners, Longboat was to his sport in his time what Tommy Burns was to boxing, Maurice Richard or Wayne Gretzky was to hockey, or what Marilyn Bell was to swimming. His stature extended beyond his achievements—beyond the borders of sport itself. He became something more. Rarely does an athlete become a legend. Many become stars, a few remain memorable, almost none attain the status of legend. Tom Longboat was the exception.

Tom Longboat was not only known as a great runner at the turn of the century in Canada, and in southern Ontario where he came from, the Six Nations, but he was known all over the world as this incredible athlete who raced against the best runners from every country and invariably beat them all at marathon running.

Tom came from a very humble background, but he was an incredible, honourable person, an incredible, dedicated person. He overcame many adversities and never stopped being a gentleman, always persevering, always finishing the race.

The exhibits on Tom Longboat can be found at Six Nations. There's the sports museum there. In fact, this June 21 they have their annual Tom Longboat run, and on Toronto Island every year they have the Tom Longboat run. This year will mark the 30th anniversary of the Tom Longboat race at Toronto Island, and that's a great tribute to Tom Longboat.

Tom Longboat began racing competitively in 1906, making his debut in Hamilton's Around the Bay Road Race, and that Around the Bay Road Race is still run today. Longboat continued to race and he continued to win. He broke records wherever he went. Just 10 days after the Around the Bay race, Tom Longboat won the 15-mile Toronto road race by three minutes. He won the annual Christmas Day 10-miler not long after. At 19, to everybody's shock and horror, he won the Boston Marathon, which is the race of races for marathoners. Here is an unknown young lad from Six Nations, from Canada, whom nobody knew about, and he beat the best in the world at the Boston Marathon in 1907 and broke the record by five minutes. Most of these marathon records are broken by a 10th of a second, sometimes two or three



seconds. But can you imagine? He broke the record by five minutes. He was becoming a Canadian legend.

His next big competition was in the 1908 Olympics in London, where the race was arranged to run from Windsor Castle outside of London into Wembley Stadium, where there were over 100,000 people waiting for the victorious marathoner to enter. This race was very unusual in that, sad to say, it was an extremely hot day and in that race, at about the 19-mile mark, Tom Longboat collapsed and could not finish the race.

1430

The person who was first into the stadium was an unknown baker from northern Italy, Dorando Pietri. Dorando entered the stadium at Wembley and started running the wrong way. You can imagine the gasps of the 100,000 people. He collapsed and then was picked up by a couple of attendants and directed the right way. He became the darling of everybody in England. In fact, he was disqualified, but the Queen of England at the time gave him a special cup. He became this incredible international celebrity. In Italy he's one of their great national sporting heroes.

Later on, Tom would race against Dorando Pietri and beat him in races all over the world. But anyways, there was another great marathoner that Tom was also able to compete against.

Longboat's journey to success was not an easy one. Despite his wins, despite his fame, despite his contributions towards having marathon running recognized as a national sport, he was still faced with ridicule and discrimination based on his aboriginal heritage. He was often called names and was even at times pressured to deny his heritage. But he never did. He was always proud of his Six Nations roots—and very proud, at that. Many of his fans were often condescending and very prejudicial, but he overcame all these obstacles.

Tom Longboat is known as one of the pioneers of the training method which is used by top athletes who compete today. His training methods were criticized by some of the so-called experts, but actually, the training methods used by Longboat a hundred years ago are now used today.

Longboat hit the peak of his career around the time that the First World War broke out. Out of a sense of duty to his country, what Tom did at the height of his career was sign up and volunteer to fight for Canada in World War I. His running talents were immediately put to use and he became a dispatch carrier for the 107th battalion, based in France. Longboat's duties were to run between dangerous battlefields, delivering messages from one military post to another. He ran bravely through flying bullets, deep mud, barbed wire and bombs exploding around him to deliver important messages which helped our brave soldiers communicate throughout the war. He is reported to have delivered messages around some of the most treacherous battlefields of Canadian history: Passchendaele and Vimy Ridge. Tom was there at Vimy Ridge; we just celebrated that last week in this House. In fact, if you were to visit the

National War Memorial located in Ottawa and enter the exhibit of the battle of Passchendaele, you would see a large photo of Tom Longboat in uniform during the war on the wall just as you enter, to your right.

Tom was shot and wounded twice, and despite the reports of his death, he survived and returned home. He returned home to Toronto, lived in Toronto, as I've said, and then went back to Six Nations.

Tom was so dedicated to his country that when World War II broke out, he volunteered again. Being on in years, he became a member of the Canadian Veterans Guard during the Second World War. He was stationed at a military camp near Brantford while his two sons, Thomas Jr. and Theodore, also enlisted to serve with the Canadian Armed Forces for the first time.

Tom was one of many First Nations Canadians from Ontario who volunteered to serve during these two great wars. Despite the challenges they faced, thousands volunteered to serve their country. Hundreds perished and many earned military decorations for bravery in action.

Though 100 years have passed since Tom Longboat's career peak, his legacy continues to live on today. He has been an inspiration and a role model for Ontarians of aboriginal heritage throughout the province and throughout the country. He is also revered because to this day annual runs, as I've said, are held. I think in Cornwall they have a Tom Longboat run, along with the ones in Toronto and the ones in Six Nations. In Toronto there is even a school named after him, the Tom Longboat Junior Public School, which my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River will talk about. I hope you get a flavour of this exceptional Canadian, exceptional son of the First Nations, an athlete second to none who overcame incredible obstacles and is an incredible inspiration to us as Canadians as we go ahead recognizing where our roots are and who made us such a great country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to thank the member for Eglinton—Lawrence for bringing forward the motion we are debating in the Legislature this afternoon. I also want to extend words of welcome on behalf of the PC caucus to our guests who are here from Six Nations. We're delighted to have you here for this debate.

The motion reads as follows: "That, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should proclaim June 4th of each year Tom Longboat Day in the province of Ontario."

I'm privileged to serve as our caucus critic to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. In this capacity, I have learned a great deal about the accomplishments and successes of our First Nations communities. But today we speak of the individual accomplishments of a great Canadian and a great Ontarian who happened to be of First Nation heritage.

I want to speak in support of this motion. It provides another opportunity for us to recognize and remember someone who achieved great things, and it's a chance to remember our history.



It's a fitting motion for the member for Eglinton-Lawrence who, as he said in his opening remarks, is himself a lifelong runner. According to his biography, he has run three marathons—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Four.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Four. You'll have to update your website.

Now, I've run in five provincial elections, which I think is something akin to running in five marathons. But in all seriousness, I'm proud to say that I completed a 10-kilometre Terry Fox run in 1990, just after my first election. Ten kilometres is about six miles. A marathon, however, is 26 miles, 385 yards, a much longer distance and a much greater feat of endurance. It of course is the distance between the ancient city of Athens and the city of Marathon, where the word "marathon" comes from.

Tom Longboat was one of Canada's, and indeed the world's, most renowned runners of his day. Having won many races here in Ontario, he went on to win the Boston Marathon in 1907. It was an impressive achievement, made even more spectacular as he cut almost five minutes off the previous record even as he ran uphill in a snow squall.

It was an impressive moment for Canada, for Ontario and, in particular, for the Iroquois First Nations, which had a proud tradition of achievements in running. That tradition was instrumental, history tells us, in the Iroquois Confederacy's historical dominance in the Great Lakes region.

History also records the heroism of men like Tom Longboat, who later served on the Western Front during the First World War. He was assigned the dangerous job of dispatch runner, running orders between units. Although wounded twice and once feared dead, he survived the Great War to return home to Canada in 1919.

Tom Longboat's life continues to inspire First Nations people and all of Canada. The Tom Longboat Award, established in 1951, recognizes achievement in support of physical activity among First Nations athletes.

David Blaikie, in the book *Boston: The Canadian Story*, is persuasive in describing Tom Longboat's effect in sport and in the life of our nation.

"Perhaps no Canadian athlete has been so acclaimed and defamed as Tom Longboat. The most heralded of all Canadian marathon runners, Longboat was to his sport, in his time, what Tommy Burns was to boxing, what Maurice Richard would become to hockey, Marilyn Bell to marathon swimming.

"His stature extended beyond his achievements, beyond even the borders of sport itself. He became something more. Only rarely does an athlete become a legend. Many become stars, a few remain memorable, almost none attains the status of legend.

"Longboat was an exception. His is a name that, generations after his time, is still a thing of magic, evoking an era. Longboat was larger than life, the shining best of a shining period in Canadian athletics.

"There is also a tragic side to the legend. Tom Longboat stands too as the symbol of the fallen idol, a

man devoured by his own greatness, a hero who went from rags to riches and back to rags again.

"Legend depicts Longboat as achieving great fame only to squander it... The image is inaccurate, a distortion of the real Tom Longboat, but it has somehow lived on.

"Such is the way of legends. Legends are fashioned less by those they commemorate than by others. They are gardens in which common men plant impossible dreams and harvest crops of make-believe. Good and bad are magnified, half-tones overlaid.

"Legends, by their very nature, consume the facts from which they sprang. The subject becomes greater or smaller than the fact, finally not even its shape. And those whom legend most immortalizes are those it most obscures."

Today's motion by the member for Eglinton-Lawrence highlights the singular achievement of a Canadian hero a century after his greatest exploits. Too soon do we forget our past and its most glorious moments; too soon do we forget to acknowledge those who overcame obstacles, adversity, even prejudice. Too soon do we forget our First Nations. This motion serves to remind us of all those things and more, and it is worthy of the support of the House this afternoon. Thank you very much.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I certainly want to welcome our guests on behalf of the New Democratic Party. Chief and councillors, welcome, and those who are associated with the Scotia marathon. It's a marathon I've also run. I've run a couple in my day, much, much slower than Tom Longboat, but still enough to know what goes into running a marathon.

I appreciate the member from Eglinton-Lawrence's motion this afternoon. Of course it's one that we'll support wholeheartedly. Make no mistake: What we're talking about here when we're talking about Tom Longboat is one of the great Canadians, a singular great Canadian—first and foremost because he was a great athlete but also because he was a great human being. He was a war hero, among many other aspects of Tom's life. This was a man who in a sense outran the racism around him. He outran residential school. He outran the myths that plagued him: that he was an alcoholic, that he wasn't up to much etc. This man overcame so much in his life and did it with such aplomb and such grace. The stories abound, and I'm going to share just a couple of them with you because they are so delightful.

But I also want to acknowledge that we have a great runner in the House. As I said to the Minister of Labour, we may find ourselves at odds politically about the labour file from time to time, but we will never find ourselves at odds about his ability as a runner. Certainly, when I first came to the House I felt honoured to sit in the same room with him because of his incredible achievements as a runner. So to the Minister of Labour,



one of Canada's great runners here and now, acknowledgments to you.

I like this story about Tom. It's a story that was told somewhere in France during the Great War. A British general being led to the front by a dispatch runner grew irritated with the pace set by the man and ordered him to slow down. "For God's sake," he complained, "who do you think I am, Tom Longboat?" The dispatch runner, a tall man in his late twenties, slowed and answered, "No, sir; that's me." True story.

This young man who came from, again, humble origins—and I think both of the other members who have spoken to this have alluded to the racism as part of his background. But I think as part of the mea culpa that we all have to do as Canadians—and we're all Canadian immigrants, those of us who are not native Canadians—we have to be a little bit more specific about the kind of racism, the kind of horror that Tom literally waltzed through with aplomb. These are some of the things that were said about Tom by our major dailies, so this wasn't just backroom racism; this was on the front pages of newspapers. They described him as lazy, the original dummy, stall-fed, Injun, stubborn, Redskin. These were all epithets used to describe Tom by the newspapers. Again, remember that Tom was one of the most famous athletes in the world, not just in Canada. He was one of the most famous athletes in the world. There was a cigar named after him, Longboat.

You heard the member from Eglinton—Lawrence talk about that apocryphal race in England where he collapsed. Again, there is a lot of mythology around that collapse, that perhaps he was drugged and perhaps there were bets. There was a lot of mythology around Tom's ending too, that he ended as an alcoholic; that he ended in rags. But all of that is really just a symptom of the racism that he faced throughout his life.

Here's another one: A Boston headline after his great win in 1907 said, "Hills Held No Terror for Redskin." Again, this was common language used by the major dailies of the time. When talking about the residential school experience that Tom had, and he had it briefly because he left—he outran that too—he said—remember, this is way back before residential schools were common knowledge and on the front pages of our papers: "I wouldn't even send my dog to that place."

Other things used to describe him: "Big Chief"; "Heap Big Chief"; "Old Tom," when he was in his 30s. This is a local reverend, John Morrow. He said, "Because the physical and mental makeup of the Indian is so foreign to any other athlete's and his disposition so hard at times to understand ... I can safely say that no other man ... could have managed Tom Longboat but Flanagan," who was his manager, and a manager, might I say, who was quite disreputable and who in fact sold Tom, as Tom himself described it, as if he were a racehorse.

Over and over again, you find the press describing Longboat as if he were an animal. That's how they described him. Yet through it all, he never objected, hit out, lashed out at the press. In fact, the very people who

managed him—or mismanaged him, as some might say—were the ones whom Tom was inevitably gracious to.

He ended his life—again, not complaining—as a humble garbage collector for 19 years for the city of Toronto—one of Canada's greatest athletes, one of the world's greatest athletes.

When you look at his time, the two hours and 24 minutes—my friend, the Minister of Labour, did 2:11, it was said earlier, to run a marathon, but remember when that was. That was 1907. My best race, to give you an indication of what mere mortals run it in—if I were to qualify for Boston, I would have to run in four hours. I think my best race was 4:15, almost two hours longer than Tom ran his race. So it gives you an idea of the incredible skill and ability of this man.

His training methods were mentioned, for which he endured no end of abuse. The reason that some of these quotes were made was because he was incorrigible, because he wouldn't listen to his trainers and his managers. But in fact, the training system that Tom Longboat used to train for his marathons is exactly the training system that is now used by elite athletes and recreational runners like myself; and that is, you intersperse days with long runs with days of rest. In the days that Tom ran, the thinking was that you should run flat out every day; you should run flat out all the time. In fact, in Tom's day they didn't even stop for water in some of those races. They thought that—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** And the shoes, the shoes.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Yes, and the shoes they were wearing were very different from the shoes that we're wearing now. So think of the adversity. You imagine that a Tom today could probably easily have bettered his time simply because of the way we do things, the way we run races these days.

This is what this man was up against. This is the backdrop to his incredible fame. This is the backdrop to his incredible achievement.

I absolutely agree: Of course we should honour him, but we also have to, in honouring him, take a look at ourselves as a nation, take a look again at ourselves and our legacy of racism and hatred in which Tom grew up. We can't ignore it. We have to put it out there. I'm not alone in being a child of immigrants who also experienced racism. I remember, particularly in the athletic field, my father talking about a story—he was a semi-pro boxer, an Italian immigrant. They would only allow him in the back door of the club he fought for, not the front door, because he was an Italian. That is, in our family, one generation back.

Folks, we've got to acknowledge this. When we talk about these people, when we talk about someone of the status of a Tom Longboat, we have to talk about what they were up against and we have to talk about our own background, our own history, and that history's complicity in all of the adversarial moments of their lives.

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To get back to the original motion, to get back to the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, what a wonderful



Canadian story. What a wonderful Canadian hero, a Canadian hero that every schoolchild—and there are schoolchildren here—should know about, that every schoolchild should understand. Every schoolchild should also know the history of the background that really met our First Nations people as they grew up, and the absolute, unconscionable racism that's also part of the history of this nation. We have to admit it; we have to say we're sorry. We have to do more than say we're sorry; we have to start addressing the wrongs and move on.

I think that, apart from a day celebrating Tom Longboat, what would be really appropriate in his honour would be that perhaps we could start—from federal government to provincial government—settling some of the land claims, start looking at some of the issues of First Nations people, start listening and start acting rather than simply start naming days. But hey, I'm a New Democrat; I ask for a lot.

Suffice it to say, today it's enough to just honour and to really uphold this life, this man, all he stood for, all he fought against, and look forward to, I hope, this bill passing. It's a no-brainer. I'm sure the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, if he brought it forward and asked for unanimous consent, we'd give it on the spot. Ring the bells; let's get it passed. Let's honour Tom Longboat and let's make it much, much easier for all the Toms in the future. That's the true legacy.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I apologize for interrupting. I just want to recognize in the members' east gallery the Minister of State for Labour, Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister Otaala from Uganda. High Commissioner Abola is also here from Uganda. And from the Federation of Uganda Employers, Mrs. Ssenabulya, and Milton Turyasiima, also from Uganda.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** It's not a point of order, but welcome to Queen's Park.

Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'm certain that in spirit in the chamber, perhaps in the empty section of the visitors' gallery in front of us, is the spirit of Thomas Charles Longboat enjoying, if a century after he thrilled this city with his feats, the attention that we're going to give him that is so much overdue. There are a number of things that my colleagues have said; I echo all of them.

There are a few things that I want to add in just a few short minutes on Tom Longboat. Anyone who has trained for a sport like running—in my case, swimming—can grasp one attribute that Tom Longboat had. When he began to race competitively, one of the things that he developed was the ability to sprint just before the finish line, or as my coaches used to call it, "Just pour it on." The ability to do that isn't found in too many people. It is in every way the hallmark of a champion.

Tom Longboat wore his aboriginal heritage with enormous pride, and throughout it bore himself with a dignity that made us proud as Canadians and proud as Ontarians. In having the courage not to strike back and to show people exactly what the character and the courage

of a First Nations runner was, he in fact contributed to the century of progress that we have made.

Tom Longboat was able to draw crowds of upwards of 100,000 people in that era a century ago. By comparison today in the GTA, that would be like drawing a crowd of two million people to watch you perform.

I'm very proud to support the member for Eglinton—Lawrence in his endeavour to immortalize Tom Longboat with this measure, and he'll certainly have my vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm proud to join in this debate on the motion to recognize a great Canadian, Tom Longboat. I just want to congratulate my colleague from Eglinton—Lawrence for bringing forward this particular motion to recognize this great Canadian and, if I could say, a great Ontarian from our First Nations community.

I just wanted to join the debate on one very important point. The Toronto District School Board, back in 1978, saw it as appropriate to name one of their newest schools in the Toronto area as Tom Longboat Junior Public School. This school is located in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River in the community of Malvern. The school today has a student population of just over 400 students, and many of these students truly reflect the diversity of this great city of Toronto.

Let me tell you that, on a daily basis, the students enter this school, go through the doors, and they're reminded of this great Canadian and his accomplishments from way back over 100 years ago. To the students, this is very important because the majority of these students have arrived here on our doorsteps from another part of the world where they faced the same type of adversity etc., but they go to school in my community and actually participate with each other very peacefully on a daily basis. That speaks a lot of how far this country has come from the adversity that Mr. Longboat faced way back when.

Chief Bill Montour is here today, and I understand that he would be very interested in some form of a partnership between the people in his community—and the young people especially in his community—and this school community in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River. I believe that this would be a great opportunity for new Canadians at this school to learn more about Mr. Tom Longboat and his community here in Ontario, especially his accomplishments as a Canadian and the adversity he faced way back over 100 years ago, and how far our country has come and how many differences we've made in terms of the prejudice that existed way back when.

This would be very, very worthwhile to these new Canadians because a lot of them need to learn about Canadian history. They need to learn about the great Canadians who have come long before they arrived on our doorsteps. I would say that this resolution is an attempt to honour and remember a legendary athlete, a remarkable Canadian who is a great role model for all of us; a Canadian who has worked hard to achieve his



dreams; who continued to strive for his best and who beat all the records despite all the challenges and prejudices he faced.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to add to the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** First off, let me commend the member for Eglinton—Lawrence—my colleague, my friend, a former teacher of mine, a marathon runner, historian and a coach at St. Michael's College School. Mike Colle embodies the spirit of Tom Longboat—his perseverance, his commitment, his caring. Mike Colle is a quiet hero and brings great pieces of legislation to this House.

Tom Longboat was an amazing Canadian. He was somebody who won races, both literally and figuratively. Wow; this guy won the Boston Marathon. That's amazing. As somebody who has had the opportunity to run in marathons like New York and Boston and the Olympics etc., I can't even fathom what it would be like to win that. He is somebody whom all kids, all Ontarians, all Canadians, should look up to as an incredible athlete, but not only as an athlete; as we have heard here today, as a humanitarian, as someone who's an inspiration to all of us.

Tom Longboat broke racism barriers, broke prejudice barriers. When it comes to training, he also broke the way that athletes train. He created a new model and ways of being able to train. He is somebody who is an innovator and, as I said about my colleague, a quiet hero. This is what we are, I believe, as Canadians, and what we look up to: individuals who go about doing work or great things in the community and for our province, for our country, in wartime, in any time.

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So congratulations. It's wonderful to be here with the leaders from the Six Nations and the Scotiabank marathon group that's with us here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** The member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to congratulate the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, Mr. Colle. He does represent his people and this House with a reasonable amount of dignity and decorum. This bill really reflects a lot of that genuine spirit that he brings.

In respect to the Tom Longboat legend, I think it's important to put it in perspective. This is a person who, between 1887 and 1949, achieved so much with so little support and, obviously, recognition that was often after he had passed. But the remarkable thing is, it's a statement or a testimony, if you will, to Tom Longboat, but also all marathon runners. I can tell you that it reflects a certain spirit of the individual that is really the celebration of life, that life can conquer all things with this type of courage. It's the courage, tenacity and commitment that I think has endured in almost all—certainly marathon, because it's a long and lonely activity. To persevere, often without the right training or the right—I often think of the people who come from Uganda or

other countries who win most of these marathons today. They are from countries that haven't got a decent pair of running shoes and we're whining about having \$200 Nike Air shoes. These are the very people who have the courage and tenacity to conquer all the adversity.

It's so remarkable a message that our young pages here should really hold on to: With the will and the wishes and inspiration, you can conquer all. I think it is a testimony. To think that he served in the First World War, serving Canada, was wounded twice, and persevered—I would say probably all his life. It's an inspirational story, and I commend Mr. Colle and the family for being here today, or at least the relatives, who recognize what one person can achieve with so little support. Thank you very much, Mike, for bringing this forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** First let me start by acknowledging and thanking my friend Mike Colle from Eglinton—Lawrence, who, with a great deal of passion in our private conversations, has brought forward this resolution regarding Tom Longboat.

Let me paraphrase from him and grab from the discussion that has been happening today the essence of what we're debating. We're not talking about the actual factual details of an individual who has performed, because that's on record, and that is deserved credit. But what we are talking about that has come to the attention of this House and therefore to Ontarians is that we have a man who has refused to abandon his aboriginal heritage, despite enormous pressure to do so and all of the bigotry that went with it in the 1900s. That's number one. Number two: We saw a man who was very proud to wear the maple leaf on his chest as part of the nation. Number three: a man who put his money where his mouth was by serving the country in time of war.

So we've taken the three important parts of who this man was and we're celebrating them. But what we're next celebrating, I hope, is the respect, the acknowledgement, the relationship, the friendship that comes to us from our guests today, who represent the nation, and that is the 54th elected chief of the Grand River territory of the Six Nations, Bill Montour; Councillor Ava Hill; Councillor Claudine VanEvery-Albert; Councillor Levi White, who had to leave early; and Matt Jamieson, the director of economic development for Six Nations of the Grand River territory.

This is a new day, but what the culture tells us is, they never forget the past: seven generations back, today, and seven generations in front. So today what we're celebrating is a generation back to ensure that we never forget, as an entire province, that the man did those three key things for us. He never abandoned his native heritage. He wore the maple leaf proudly. He served this country, as many veterans from First Nations have as allies.

I want to say very strongly that the member from Eglinton—Lawrence knows that and in our conversations described that and the awe that he felt about people in



that era, particularly Tom Longboat, who was able to capture the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people by his ability and his talent, but also, I dare say, by his determination to be who he was, and to represent the nation that he came from and also the nation that he was an ally to. So I want to thank Mike for bringing that forward.

I want to thank all the members for approaching this in a way that celebrates Tom Longboat, in a way that celebrates the relationship that he had with Canada, and the relationship that he continued to have.

By the way, in my riding of Brant are the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and the Mississaugas of New Credit. We were able to celebrate, and we continue to celebrate, those great individuals in our riding when we introduced the Brantford Walk of Fame, and Tom Longboat was one of the first inductees. I would say to you, respectfully, that there are many more to go, and we've already inducted several.

The greatness of these people, in the chief's words, is that there is greatness that can come from believing in yourself. The formation of our relationship, the formation of who we are as friends, and the deep respect we must hold for each other is captured by this resolution. I ask us to support this resolution.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm very pleased to stand today to say that I'll be supporting this as well. I want to congratulate the member from Eglinton—Lawrence for bringing it forward. I think, day after day in this Legislature, we tend to forget some of the very positive things that can happen here. Usually the debate shows opposition versus government, but when you come up with a project like this, where we have basically unanimous consent—as someone said here, it's a no-brainer—I think that we should move forward on this. I hope that it will become law.

I want to welcome the visitors here today to witness this. You're actually witnessing a little bit of history, because we seldom agree on anything in this Legislature.

As a member of the Legislature who has two First Nations in my riding, one being the Chippewas of Rama and the other one being the Beausoleil First Nation, we have a very, very proud heritage.

I want to just reflect on a couple of the comments that were made, one by the member from Brant. Not only do we have someone as famous and as loyal as Tom Longboat, but I think there's something that a lot of Ontarians and a lot of Canadians don't realize, and that it's our job to make sure we can protect that so that other Ontarians do realize this: the tremendous contribution of our First Nations brothers and sisters in the Great Wars. Each and every year I go to both a Remembrance Day service on Christian Island and I also attend one in the community of Rama. It never ceases to amaze me how many, particularly young men, gave their life for this wonderful country. I don't know, on a per capita basis, how many people actually understand and realize that. In

terms of the number per capita, I would say, compared to most nationalities, that it's two to one or three to one. I can tell you, we have seen that and are very, very proud of that in our community.

So I'm happy today to take part in this debate. I'm really pleased to see so many people supporting this.

We heard a couple of times about the Boston Marathon running, and I wanted to say that—the Minister of Labour mentioned what an accomplishment it is to win the Boston Marathon. We have two residents in our riding right now, one lady is 62, and she has worked very hard to become a marathon runner and has qualified. I think the marathon is on this weekend, is it not? The Boston Marathon is this weekend, I think. I'm not exactly sure, but it's either this weekend or next week.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** It's Monday.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** It's on Monday? Okay. So on Monday, Deb Stone is competing in that. She trained for years to get to that point and qualify. Another friend of mine, Ross Sallows, wanted to be able to compete in the Boston Marathon by the time he was 50, and he's made that as well. So in my community, we have two people going to Boston to compete in that marathon. They just want to finish. They're not planning on beating those guys from Ethiopia and Kenya. They just want to finish and say they were part of that. I believe there are 26,000 or 27,000 people in the marathon.

1510

Congratulations to Mr. Colle for bringing this forward. I think it's a great private member's resolution. I hope we can pass this as soon as possible. I think we owe it to Mr. Longboat, to the city of Toronto, to the province of Ontario and, of course, to all of our First Nations brothers and sisters.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Colle has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I really do appreciate the heartfelt comments by my colleagues from Wellington—Halton Hills, Simcoe North, Mississauga—Streetsville, Durham, Parkdale—High Park, Brant and Scarborough—Rouge River.

After being in this place for 15 years, like some of you, you sometimes get a bit frustrated or a bit off this place. But days like today make you reflect on how you can make a difference sitting here in this Legislature and make Ontario a place that respects people like Tom Longboat.

Sure, this is a resolution, and we're speaking to it as part of a debate. But this will hopefully be a catalyst so that children will honour the memory of Tom Longboat and governments will honour him, because you can see the power of athletics.

We've got people here from Uganda. They know the power of athletics and the great accomplishments—incredible achievements—that African runners have brought to the world of running. We saw that in Vancouver. The whole country was mobilized by athletes. The whole world was watching in peace and harmony as athletes brought the world together.



That's why we can't underestimate the power of the spirit of someone like Tom Longboat and the good he could do for future generations. His spirit does live on in his accomplishments. Maybe out of this resolution we can help keep that torch going and pass it on and do better things with our children and our First Nations.

You've got to remember the roots of Tom Longboat: He came from the world's longest-living participatory democracy, the Six Nations. It's no wonder he came from that background, which is still very rich today and still offering so much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will vote on Mr. Colle's ballot item in about 50 minutes.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE  
AND ELDERLY PEOPLE  
FROM ABUSE ACT  
(POWERS OF ATTORNEY), 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PROTECTION  
DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES  
ET DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES  
CONTRE LES MAUVAIS TRAITEMENTS  
(PROCURATIONS)

Mr. O'Toole second reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur la prise de décisions au nom d'autrui en ce qui a trait aux procurations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I hope that 12 minutes is enough time in this arena where we get to express our comments with respect to issues we believe in.

I want to acknowledge a couple of people who have joined us today: first of all, Tammy Rankin, who is the chair of the Durham Elder Abuse Network. Welcome, Tammy, and thank you very much for taking the time out of your busy schedule. Also, two constituents of Frank Klees, Risha Gotlieb and her husband, Philip, have taken the time to share their personal story of the potential abuses that can occur when families and others aren't protected with the proper law.

To put this in context, if people want some history on it, I want to make sure that members here today on all sides of the House recognize that I did debate almost the identical bill, I might say respectfully, for the Substitute Decisions Act—my voice is not because I have an emotional reason; it's just that I need a glass of water.

The intent of the bill is quite sincere and genuine, to the extent that it wants to encourage the education of all members to the growing challenge of an aging population and the many challenges that surround that. I expect all comments should keep that in mind. I don't think we have the definitive solution here, and I'd be the first one to admit it.

The bill is intended to protect seniors and other vulnerable individuals from the possible abuse of power of attorney. I should start by saying, what is the power of attorney? The definition is a good place to start. There are several definitions of the power of attorney. It's a document, in this case, that's initiated by the province of Ontario, by the Attorney General. There it is. It's a document that gives a person the right to make binding decisions for another as an agent, and it's a pretty powerful document. We don't realize that. You're signing these, and the circumstances that people sign them in is really what's at issue here.

There are a variety of definitions. I think of it in a simple way. If you look it up in the Webster's Dictionary, it says that it's the power to act for another person in legal or financial matters. Now, that's a pretty significant—we should pause and reflect on that. The power of attorney itself—this is the kit that you can download from the website, which I did this morning. It's a fairly comprehensive and instructive little document here. But at the end, when you get to it, it's about a two-page document where you put the person's name who is the grantor, and the person who is the signature on it has been granted the authority to act as power of attorney.

It's very important, to stop and think—often, it's done when the person is at their most vulnerable. They're already showing signs of—the capability issue comes up. I guess I'm suggesting in the overall remarks here that, in the debate, I would like to see some structure put around that. I don't want to make it mandatory. Do you understand? Mandatory means that you have to go and get a lawyer, legislate that people go and get a lawyer and get a power of attorney drawn up properly. That's a pretty foreboding challenge which I would not support.

But I do think that there are occasions and interventions where the family and other significant individuals, be it a doctor, a clergy member or whatever, could give them advice and be trained, of course, to give that advice, to say, "John"—I'm using this in a gesture, a reference—"you're showing signs of memory loss or whatever else it is. It's time that you completed a power of attorney." Say it's the doctor and they're giving me a dementia medication or something. I'm using myself as an example. Of course, this isn't the case—that I'm aware of. Did I already say that? But anyway, the doctor might take the time to say what a power of attorney is and how it could be exercised. It could, in fact, be a doctor, a nurse, one of your children or a person whom you respect that you want to look after certain decisions.

I'm suggesting—this is not in the bill—that this will start the discussion, given the climate we're in with the baby boomers moving along. Next year, they become the seniors of the future, and there are growing challenges in all aspects of our society. We need to make sure that they're not abused or neglected. In that context, we all should think about this, not in the partisan way but moving forward. That's how I would put it.

But that's what the power of attorney does, and I say that there are lots of people working around the province. I want to acknowledge that there are people who have



worked and helped me and brought this to my attention, actually. That's where it comes in. I'd have to say that I have met with constituents—Brenda and Alan Hoyne and Alan's sister Lorraine Hoyne—and they told me of a family situation which I just couldn't believe. Later—I won't recount that. Perhaps Mr. Klees or others will bring to our attention the—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you. I have enough water here. I could actually have a swimming pool.

Risha Gotlieb and her husband, Philip, brought a story forward as well which is rather wrenching. Detective Sergeant John Keating, who is a seniors' support coordinator with the Durham regional police, has also shared, along with Tammy Rankin, some of the stories of situations that they deal with. In fact, they deal with them every day, and I thank them for their service to our community. They're professional and compassionate people, and I think we need to have more of that in our communities.

1520

I would say that even if I look around—there's Detective Phil Lillie as well with the Durham Regional Police. I know other officers are being trained and sensitized to this issue of intervening in family situations. That's really what's quite troubling here. Often, I hear that people go to the police not knowing how to deal with it, where some abuse is taking place, whether it's physical or financial, and the police feel powerless. They sort of think it's a civil matter and they shouldn't intervene in the family affairs. You get into how the sensitivity of this issue is extremely important, knowing the rights to intervene and how to intervene, and that's part of what this bill does.

I'll give you an example of what could happen today. I actually have said this 50 times in here. I'm in a nursing home every week. I have power of attorney, through one of these forms, for my mother-in-law. She's 92, mostly with it, but not always—a wonderful person. I've met other people within that nursing home who I know have no visitors and have a quality of life that is not something I would look forward to. But the point I'm making is that many of them would be easily taken advantage of. If somebody came in and said, "You sign this form"—and they put it in front of them—"so I can get you a rollator or a walker," once that's signed, they could actually clean out your bank account. That's the issue: the trust in that relationship.

I'm suggesting that these people generally should, at a certain point, get the power of attorney filled out. Think of who you would want to do it, have a chat with them—even designate different people. But what my bill does is it would require that the witness could not be a member of the family. It also requires that there would be registry with the public guardian and trustee office. That registry would mean that you, as a family member or other, could find out under certain conditions who in fact has the power of attorney. Otherwise, one of the sisters or brothers or other relatives could show up in the nursing

home and say, "Sign this. I'm going to get an elevator put in the home." They sign it; now who's the real power of attorney? Because there's no registry. I mean, whoever shows up at the bank with one, technically, unless somebody's going to question it—and who do they question? Do they question the person who has granted the power of attorney or the person who's suggesting they have it? "I've got it here. John signed this." It's very, very poorly structured.

In my little bit of time left here—I wonder if I could get an hour or so on this. Anyway, here is the issue, though: There's probably a suggestion in here that there should be two or three types of power of attorney. I'm certain that someone who has a trust fund or has amassed certain assets in their life probably has had experience with a law firm, a financial advisor, maybe even other significant individuals. They should probably not have one of these. This is grade 1; this is very minor. It suited the purpose for this point in time. Someone of modest means, sort of like myself—I mean, just a step above poor—probably should have some other independent person's oversight advice, whether it's from the bar or whether it's from a trusted, knowledgeable individual.

We're drawn to the fact that if you do something in a family, it becomes a division point. "If I gave it to my son Ernie, my daughter Mary might be upset." Once they start to find this out, it creates interventions in the family that just aren't necessary. Do it when you're in firm control of your resources and faculties with suggested third party advice, be it legal or otherwise, and the registry that this bill provides.

I'm asking members to give this bill a chance to go to hearings and listen to the experts, some of whom are here today. Listen to their testimonies as well as their suggestions. I think we will be doing a service to people as they move forward. Think of the bill that we're dealing with in the regular course of business, Bill 21, which is the retirement home provision. That would be a good time, with those persons in long-term care, administrators and others, and in retirement homes, to intervene, straighten out this power-of-attorney business so that we have the right person with the right authority at the right time in the right place to make sure that the individual, elder or otherwise, who's vulnerable is protected. That's the intent, and I think we could all do the right thing and not be viewed as partisan. I'd call on all parties and all members to look to the future. It could be your parents that you're helping.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** First of all, let me compliment the member opposite for the intention and the motive behind his introducing this bill. The member opposite, like all members of this chamber, really does have the best interests of the vulnerable in mind, and so I compliment you for bringing this forward.

Having said that, there's the other side of the coin to consider. I do bring some history to this issue. For many years in the 1990s—four or five years—I was the president of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. Before



that, I was the president of the Alzheimer Society of Toronto. I particularly remember the debate around the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992. This issue that the member opposite has put before the House today was, in fact, thought about, talked about, and debated. At the time, the informed decision, the best decision that all of the legislators and expert witnesses and so forth could come to was that the ideas proposed by the member today were not going to go forward. Why weren't they going to go forward? Here is the argument against what you've proposed.

First of all, my comments will be around the two principal points in your bill: the issue of notification; that is, when someone has granted someone a power of attorney, the public trustee has to be notified that the person has received a power of attorney. That's one issue. The other big issue in this bill is the issue of the public trustee maintaining a registry of everybody in Ontario who has given a power of attorney and to whom that power of attorney has been given.

Therein presents the problem that was of such interest to everybody in 1992, and that is, there was a clear feeling among the people who were not vulnerable but were concerned that at some point they would become vulnerable, and they wanted to give one of their children or a friend or a lawyer or whoever a power of attorney. One of the things uppermost in their minds at the time they granted that power of attorney was a sense that they wanted to keep that decision that they had given someone a power of attorney, and to whom they had given the power of attorney, a private matter. That was their private business, like their income tax return, like other things in their life.

Why would they want to keep it private? Because I remember in the debates asking people, "What's wrong with somebody knowing that you've given so-and-so power of attorney and that if you become incapacitated, that power-of-attorney person is going to step in?" Interestingly enough, the answer was—and it was typically in a family situation: "I've got two or three or four children. I've got brothers and sisters and so on. For a variety of reasons, I don't want the others to know that I've chosen one child to be my power of attorney but not any of the other two or three," or, "I've chosen my sister but not my brother," and so on. They felt that the potential there for discord, particularly in a family setting, was troublesome. They said, "If I give my daughter rather than my son, or my brother rather than my sister, power of attorney, and I want the rest of the family and the rest of my friends to know about that, let me have that decision to tell them, 'You're my power of attorney,' and to explain to my other children or other brothers and sisters why I've not asked them to do it. Let me make that decision. I know how to handle that issue."

1530

If, as this bill proposes, I'm required, if I give someone a power of attorney, to call up a bureaucrat, the public trustee's office, and say, "I've asked so-and-so to be my attorney," and I've got to file various papers and, not only that, the public trustee has to maintain a public

registry where everybody is listed, who has power of attorney and so on, that is an invasion of my privacy. I'm quite capable of taking that decision at the same time I create my power of attorney, because, by definition, I can only create a power of attorney when I'm fully capable. So I know who I want to know who has my power of attorney.

That is what the debate centred around. At the end of the day, at that time, the decision was taken to respect or, if you will, side with that argument or those people who said, "Look, when I'm getting to that stage where I'm thinking about a power of attorney, let me make the decision who I want to be informed, how public I want to go with it. Don't require me to notify a faceless bureaucrat who will then maintain a faceless technical registry and everybody will know about it. Grant me that dignity."

For that reason and the fact that we debated the issue at length in 1992, although I understand, and I respect and compliment the member for bringing this matter forward, I will not be able to support this at this time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm very happy to stand and speak on Bill 3, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney. There are two or three of us who are going to say a few comments on this bill.

What I wanted to mention more than anything is the effort my colleague Mr. O'Toole, the member for Durham, puts into his job. I can tell you that most people will understand by the amount of time he spends here in the Legislature that he's one of the more active members of this Legislature, and he has had a tremendous number of wins as far as private members' bills go. I'm thinking of things like the Irish heritage bill, which he worked on a number of times with some of the other folks here and had it passed; the vintage car bill; and, of course, many people in this Legislature will recall the number of times Mr. O'Toole worked on the cellphone bill. It was defeated by the government and actually frowned upon on a few occasions, until eventually the province of Ontario made it a law, and many other provinces in the country have followed that.

People should understand that when you have a member like Mr. O'Toole, he understands the issues in his riding and he works hard to get some of the private members' time that he's allotted. He spends a tremendous amount of effort to make sure that he brings forward valuable legislation that will mean something to the citizens of Ontario. That's why I give him so much credit. Every time I see those signs on the highway that say, "No texting," or "No handheld devices," I think of John O'Toole because I know the effort he put into the cellphone bill.

That being said, why did Mr. O'Toole bring Bill 3 forward? He has seen a need in his community. He understands his community. He understands the tremendous problems we have with elder abuse in the province of Ontario and the fact that there is not enough



being done about it. Do you know what? He probably knows that this government won't support him in this. They'll find some reason not to support a bill like this. However, as someone close to his riding, he works the riding on a daily basis, and he knows all of the events that are held in his riding. He works with seniors groups throughout the community, and they're telling him there's a problem here. He is responding in a very positive manner and looking at private members' time to bring this forward and bring this debate to the floor. Do you know what? If you defeat him on it, he'll come back again with it, until eventually it will probably become some kind of a law or the government will respond to it.

What I'm saying here today is that not enough has been done. There's more work to be done with all forms of elder abuse, whether it's financial, domestic or whatever it may be. The reality is, there is a problem. He understands that problem from the people that he works with in his riding, and that's why the people in his riding will pat him on the back this weekend. They know that even if the government defeats this bill, the reality is, it's good legislation and he's trying to do something on behalf of all of the seniors that are in his riding.

As we know, the age of seniors, the demographics are increasing in the province of Ontario, and we have all kinds of issues around it. We won't even start down that path today because there are so many issues around long-term care and community care access centres.

But I'll give him a word of thanks for bringing this bill forward, and I hope that, whether it's today or at some other point, the government will adopt this bill or adopt the intent of this bill and give Mr. O'Toole another win.

Thank you very much, and I appreciate the opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** First, I want to make it clear that we're supporting the bill on second reading. We think it should go to committee. But, as Mr. Zimmer is wont to say, having said that, I want to raise some questions and concerns about the proposition of the member for Durham. Wanting it to go to committee—I think it's high time that this whole issue was addressed by a committee, with appropriate inquiries, because there are, no doubt, problems.

I want to make one thing very clear, and I disagree with the member from Durham vehemently in this regard: I could never tell an Ontarian, somebody here in this province, in good faith, to rely upon a do-it-yourself kit or anybody other than a qualified lawyer—when I say qualified, I mean a lawyer who's experienced in this area—when preparing a power of attorney. This is complex stuff. There are all sorts of variations that could be incorporated, and a competent lawyer has the initial responsibility of determining the capacity before she or he has a client sign or grant a power of attorney. Similarly, she or he has the ability to discuss with a client, the grantor of the power of attorney, all of the options available to him or her. This thing can be as simple or as complex as somebody wants it to be. It can

have exclusions, because it doesn't have to be broad-based; it can be very specific and narrow. It can address particular issues or it can be broad-based.

It appears—and if others have more experience in this regard, help me—the power of attorney can explicitly state that it only becomes effective once the person loses capacity. You can have a power of attorney that doesn't require on that event to happen first. I can give you a power of attorney right now to deal with my banking in Welland, should I wish. I don't have to be incapacitated to give that you power of attorney. There are circumstances wherein people don't pass the test for incapacity or simply—to demonstrate the fact that I went to law school some long time ago—to demonstrate that they are not non compos mentis.

Section 8, "Capacity to give continuing power of attorney," lists a number of qualities. The act is very specific: the inability to manage one's property is, in and of itself, not an incapacity. A person could be infirm, not incapacitated in terms of the mental capacity. A person could be home-ridden or bedridden and have all of the mental capacity necessary to make decisions around his or her affairs and do it in a very astute way, yet still want to grant a power of attorney to somebody. Or a person could want to grant a power of attorney in anticipation of that point of time where they become incapacitated. It doesn't necessarily have to be as a result of aging. Being a victim in an accident where one is left, for instance, unconscious: a very specific circumstance wherein somebody very much wants a power of attorney—and, quite frankly, in my view, wants a power of attorney prepared by a competent lawyer who knows the law around powers of attorney and who can provide all the safeguards, at least all the safeguards that are available.

1540

I am troubled, as are some other commenters on the bill, about the disclosure of the identity of attorneys in the registry that's proposed by the sponsor of this bill. The disclosure is far more relevant if it's a power of attorney that takes effect only upon the grantor becoming incapacitated and if the disclosure only occurs after this incapacitation. In other words, it would be valuable, if I become incapacitated, for those people who might have an interest in my affairs to know who my attorney is or whether or not there is one. It's of no value for my family—and, to be fair, the drafter or the sponsor of the bill is very specific in terms of identifying spouse or partner, children over 18 etc. I don't know why they have to be 18 to get this information. Think about it. Why should they? A 16-year-old or a 15-year-old has as much of an interest in knowing who their mother's or father's attorney is, in the event that that attorney becomes effective, and in the case of a conditional power of attorney—that's when the person becomes incapacitated—or in the instance of a non-conditional power of attorney; that's whenever.

I don't understand the rationale for providing this information. Either it's public or it's not, and it's not. There is an interest, once a person becomes incapacitated, for certain people to have access to information



identifying his or her attorney. Let's say nursing staff in a hospital who may be unfamiliar with my personal situation, family, friends, what have you—there I am, stretched out, unconscious, comatose, certainly not compos mentis—want to find out if anybody has my power of attorney. That seems to be a perfectly valid rationale for letting them inquire. But that would clearly be after I become incapacitated, and there is a need to know who the power of attorney is.

The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, this gaggle of bureaucrats whom Mr. Zimmer describes as faceless—he's the parliamentary assistant, and he described them as faceless. Mr. Zimmer, I suspect, knows this bureaucracy. I know it, too. I'm not sure I know it as well as Mr. Zimmer; perhaps I know it more. But I would never describe these people as faceless. They're arrogant, they're supercilious, they're heavy-handed, they're brutish, and they're insensitive to the point of crassness when it comes to dealings with persons who are incapacitated and/or family members and others who have an interest in the welfare of that person. Of all of the bureaucracies in this province, that is the one that has caused my office the most grief. It's a mindset, a culture over there that I find unpleasant, that I find incredibly unhelpful and that I believe to be a betrayal of the spirit of public guardianship and public trusteeship. I find it very troubling.

Bring it on. My email address is public. Go to the Queen's Park web page, and you will find it there. Every time I say something like this about a particular group, I get a whole pile of emails from all sorts of members of the public across the province who are inclined to agree.

That's why I'd be interested to have this bill go to committee: because we could talk about some of that culture. It's a dangerous culture, I tell you, parliamentary assistant. It's one I find particularly bothersome. Nobody's acting illegally. Nobody's acting improperly. It is, as one officer of the assembly stated it, perhaps just a matter of rule-itis. I can't recall who that officer was at the moment, but one very effective officer of the assembly referred to it as rule-itis in dealing not with that bureaucracy but with another.

That's one: legal advice. What that means is, we have to make it easier for people to get legal advice. In the total scheme of things, it's not horribly expensive, but it is expensive. I had a power of attorney prepared for me before I went in for that surgery in January and I used Rodney Kajan, a good friend of mine and a very, very competent lawyer who primarily does solicitor's work. He knows his law in regard to wills and powers of attorney. He's the sort of guy—I urge people to give Rodney Kajan a call if they're in Welland, or any other number of capable solicitors, people who know the law and who don't take anything for granted, don't assume anything. I mean, Rodney Kajan, even though he's my friend—I've known him for 35 years, however long, and we work closely on so many things—took me through the steps so that he could be satisfied, as a lawyer, as the person simply preparing the power of attorney, that I was

fully aware of all of my options and that I was capable of entering into one.

(1) Get a lawyer and (2) understand that if you don't have a power of attorney—and there are two types: dealing with property and dealing with the person—you can't forget that. Wise people would have both of them because anything can happen at any time. Have it prepared by a lawyer. Understand, if you don't have a power of attorney, you can have the people in the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee be dealing with your affairs, and they are described as anything from faceless—it's the most benign description we've heard about them yet today, the kindest description of it: faceless. We haven't heard anything more generous than faceless yet. Perhaps Mr. Klees, when he talks to this bill, will sort of balance the scales a little bit. We've had them described as anything from faceless to arrogant to supercilious. Understand that if you don't have a power of attorney, it's the public guardian and trustee.

I have concerns about adding the provision that one family member can be a witness. I would question why, and the committee would be an excellent opportunity for the author of this bill, the sponsor, Mr. O'Toole, the member for Durham, to explain, along with others who may agree with him. I think it's horribly important to make sure that that document is pristine and that its integrity is unimpeachable. It seems to me, then, that in view of the fact it's family members who might have an interest in the administration of an attorney or the exercise of it, the witnessing of it—especially when you want to make sure that the person signing it has the capacity to sign it. That's the most troubling part: that grey area where undue influence can be imposed upon people who are starting to waver in their capacity. You need the witnesses. The witnesses are witnesses not just to the signature, but witnesses also in fact—perhaps in law, and I'm not clear on this in my own mind, but certainly in fact—as to the capacity of the person to sign at the time they sign. A family member who may have an interest—perhaps it shouldn't just be family members; it should be anybody who has the potential to have an interest in the administration of that person's affairs. But that's subject matter for committee.

I'm also concerned about the fact that this bill turns the power of attorney into a public document, at least with a certain class of people, before that's in any way necessary, and violates the fundamental privacy of it.

We will be supporting it. I'm looking forward to it going to committee. Thank you, Mr. O'Toole.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** First, I'm honoured and privileged to stand up and speak on An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney. First, I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Durham for his determination. I think he's bringing this bill for a second time. I don't feel bad about bringing it again and again because it's happened to me, too. I brought my bill this week again, actually, after it died on the order paper. It's the way it goes. It's a private



member's bill. You suggest and you come up with a bill with ideas to reflect the voices and the concerns of your constituents.

I've listened to two able lawyers, the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and the member from Welland. They've explained the complexity of the issue. To many people around this place, and probably many lawyers across the province of Ontario, this bill is not new. I guess it was being debated and discussed in 1992 and raised so many different concerns from many different legal specialists in this area. As my colleague the member from Willowdale, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, mentioned—and he said it many different times—the people in their goodwill choose a person to represent them when they get ill or sick or they go somewhere, and they want them to represent them in their weakness. They choose that person carefully to represent them because they have a trust in that person.

1550

When we force people to register the power of attorney, as the member from Willowdale mentioned, we put it in a bureaucratic system and we bring the government and bureaucracy to the system to intervene between family members, which will make the issue more complex and bring the government into family business.

I think many people across the province of Ontario, especially seniors, don't want to see the complexity of the issue. They don't want to create more of a burden on the person who, in his or her choice, represents them in their weakest time or absent time—to be also put in jeopardy in a difficult time.

Therefore, I think the member for Durham has good intentions and believes passionately in this issue. He probably listened to many different seniors in his riding. That's what he mentioned, and that's why he's bringing this issue for the second time to this House, with hopes for it to pass and go to committee and become law in the province of Ontario.

But as a result of advice from the Attorney General and my colleagues, both lawyers, I think it's very complex; it's not as easy as you think. We're going to create more layers of bureaucracy. We're going to make it more difficult for seniors to act alone, independently, if we force them to register the power of attorney. According to all the professionals in this field, they said to me—and I read many different analyses about this bill—that it will make it more difficult for seniors to act.

As a matter of fact, if we pass this bill or if it becomes law, it doesn't mean the abuse of seniors or the power of attorney will be eliminated; as a matter of fact, it will not. It will make it more difficult and more complex. As I mentioned at the beginning, and as my colleague mentioned when he spoke before me, it will make it more complex because it will go into the bureaucracy of the legal system in the province of Ontario. As everybody knows, some issues sit on the desk of the court for many years, not being touched due to the complexity of the issue, due to the number of legal issues being dealt with in the courts.

I wish the member from Durham all the luck, but I found it difficult—as I found it difficult in the beginning when I entered the debate a year ago, when he introduced it for the first time—to support this, because to me, it does not make sense. To me, it has a good heart and a good intention to serve seniors, but as a matter of fact, by introducing it in the way he introduced it here, it will make it more complex and more difficult for seniors to manoeuvre and have flexibility in choosing the person to represent them in their weakest time or in their absence.

Therefore, I think this bill does not serve seniors well. I'm here in this place to support my seniors in London—Fanshawe and the seniors of the province of Ontario to create the laws and regulations to make it easier for them, to make it more flexible for them to be able to choose the person they want without any burden, without any complexity, without damaging any relationship between family members.

Again, I'm not going to vote for this bill, not because I don't like the member for Durham—he's a great member—but, hey, it does not fit with the direction of the legalities. As both lawyers mentioned, it's very complex. So that's why—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Send it to committee.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I don't want to send everything to committee and have the committee deal with it. It's a matter of understanding the complexity, and I think it's not going to serve seniors. Therefore, I'm not going to support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to say at the outset that certainly I'll be supporting this bill. I too, as has been expressed by some of my colleagues, have some concerns about specific aspects of the bill, but we'll discuss those in public hearings. I think that's the purpose of having public hearings.

What is absolutely confounding to me is to hear the member opposite say that he's voting against it, that he doesn't want it to go to a public hearing, that he doesn't want it to go to committee. I do hope that the public is listening and heard what this member said. Why would the government of the day want to keep a bill such as this, which has the purest of intentions and can only benefit the people of Ontario, from having a fulsome discussion in committee through public hearings, to have people like Risha and Phil Gotlieb come forward to the public hearing and tell us their story, tell us what their experience is?

I sat with my constituents and I listened to what happened to them, and I believe that every member of the Legislature should have that opportunity. This bill goes a great distance towards addressing the concerns that are represented by the Gotliebs. I can say to you—and as we heard from my colleague Mr. O'Toole what he's hearing from police services in Durham alone, the number of complaints that the police services deal with on a daily basis that relate to elder abuse.

This is not a technical discussion here. It's not a matter of saying, "We're going to save the clerks some



time and so we'll keep this bill out of committee." What are you going to do? Are you going to go golfing? What are you going to do with your time? We're here to deal with important legislation, and we have an issue. Don't you hear from people in your ridings, in your constituency?

You've heard Mr. O'Toole and you've heard Mr. Kormos say that we have recurrences every single day in this province, which tells us we have an issue. We, as legislators, have a responsibility to put in place legislation and laws that protect the most vulnerable in our society. Who's more vulnerable than the elderly who cannot make important decisions about their financial affairs, about their personal affairs? Shouldn't we be putting something in place to protect them and their families?

I'm so disappointed that, notwithstanding all of the efforts of Mr. O'Toole, we now have had two members from the Liberal government in this province stand in their place to say that they're going to vote against it. What that means, typically, is that this private member's bill has obviously been whipped by the government, and the result of that will be that it probably won't pass. We'll see.

We have other members. Dr. Jaczek is here representing the good riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, someone who, as a former medical officer of health, no doubt has experienced the concerns that Mr. O'Toole has brought forward as well, and I'll be interested to know if we have your support on this bill.

I'll take this opportunity to appeal to the other members of the Liberal caucus. Put aside the cajoling that you've had from the parliamentary assistant, who's given you a very technical reason as to why he doesn't support this bill. Put aside the whip that you've heard and perhaps felt from your chief government whip. Put aside the memo that you got from the Premier's office that says, "Don't you dare vote for this because we don't want to have this exposed." Listen to the parliamentary assistant when he himself talks about the faceless bureaucrats in his own ministry.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** And we know what that implies.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** And we know what that implies: That implies that there are people there who don't care what happens here.

I just want to add my comments to Mr. Kormos's about the Public Guardian and Trustee. Here's what I have found in my dealings with that office, and that is, it's all about the letter of the law and it's not even coming close to the spirit of the law. There's nothing there that we would expect to have as a guardian or a trustee that has a responsibility to consider the broad circumstances and do what's right for the person within the framework of the law rather than trying simply to protect yourself and to have done your job at the end of the day, punch the card, leave the office and forget about the problems that the individuals have that they're supposed to be looking after.

1600

I look forward to this bill going to committee. I believe that it's important, that there is an accounting on the part of powers of attorney as to how they are dealing on an annual basis with the affairs of the estates. One of the issues that was brought to me by the Gotliebs is in fact that a power of attorney has no obligation to keep records as to how they've disposed of the assets of an estate or how they've spent that money. At the very least, we have to keep our records for seven years for Revenue Canada. Someone with a power of attorney has no obligation under law to keep any records of any kind as to how they have administered that estate. That's fundamentally wrong. The government doesn't even want this bill to go to committee. Shame on you. Come on; this is about dealing with important affairs. It's about us stepping forward and saying, "Let's protect vulnerable people in our province and let's do our job as legislators."

We'll see what happens in the vote. I do hope that we can meet again in committee and we can actually have the good intentions of Mr. O'Toole realized by the passing of an appropriate bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Durham, Mr. O'Toole, has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Quickly, I'd like to thank David Zimmer—I'm disappointed, but I do thank him—and Mr. Kormos, and I thank him and I'm confident that he'll see the clarity of going to committee on this, and the member from London–Fanshawe. It's clear that he's been whipped by the party to vote one way, as I hear their comments aren't sensitive to the needs of the elderly. This is private members' public business; this is not a partisan issue. This is not going to become law. I fully understand this. This is about continuing debate, moving forward.

The member for Newmarket–Aurora, a very highly respected and esteemed person here, I think has it right in terms of: It's a debate that needs to happen. I'm sure some form of response will develop over time.

I'm not criticizing others, except to look at it. Why I introduced this bill: You have to remember that Premier McGuinty prorogued the House. When he did that, this bill was already referred to committee. It had passed second reading—identical bill. So I rushed because of prorogation and reintroduced it, and that's why we're debating it again today. It passed unanimously the last time and it was before committee but never called.

What this opportunity is for you is to show some independence and vote in support of it to move it to committee. I say to you that without the prorogation by the Premier, this thing would have been heard by committee eventually and they would have held public discussions.

But in the minutes that are left I want to quote from Sergeant John Keating. He said of the power of attorney kit, "It's easier to get a power of attorney document than to get a licence for a pet."



I've got a letter here from Risha Gotlieb and her husband Phil. It says, "It is the province's current legislation that facilitates and enables abuse" that is referred to in this legislation. Tammy Rankin has said to me that she deals with this every day in her 17-year career working with the elderly adults in our community.

If you have any compassion, you'll support this bill so we can continue to discuss in it committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AUX CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will first deal with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Mr. McNeely. I ask members to take their seats, please.

Mr. McNeely has moved second reading of Bill 6, An Act to increase awareness of climate change.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'd ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? So ordered.

#### TOM LONGBOAT DAY

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot number 8.

Mr. Colle has moved private member's notice of motion number 22.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE AND ELDERLY PEOPLE FROM ABUSE ACT (POWERS OF ATTORNEY), 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES ET DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES CONTRE LES MAUVAIS TRAITEMENTS (PROCURATIONS)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 9.

Mr. O'Toole has moved second reading of Bill 3, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 with respect to powers of attorney.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1606 to 1611.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order. I ask members to please take their seats, and I do apologize, but we're going to have a vote.

Mr. O'Toole has moved second reading of Bill 3. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

DiNovo, Cheri  
Hardeman, Ernie

Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter

O'Toole, John  
Witmer, Elizabeth

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Colle, Mike  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe

Fonseca, Peter  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Kular, Kuldip  
Levac, Dave  
McNeely, Phil  
Mordid, Reza  
Pendergast, Leanna

Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramal, Khalil  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 6; the nays are 23.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negated.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RETIREMENT HOMES ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LES MAISONS DE RETRAITE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 14, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes/ Projet de loi 21, Loi réglementant les maisons de retraite.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 21, An Act to regulate retirement homes, which was introduced on March 29 of this year. Also, I want to compliment the critic, the member who is responsible for the seniors' secretariat, the member from Cambridge, for the work that he has done on our behalf



in getting some of our concerns and support for the bill on the public record.

I think it's important to, first of all, establish what is going to happen once this is passed. It will establish a self-governing regulatory authority that's going to educate, license and inspect retirement homes to ensure they meet prescribed standards. I think most people would certainly support that. We want to know that the homes where these individuals are going to be living, obviously, are up to the standards that they should be.

It will also ensure government accountability and oversight of the regulatory authority, and there are going to be reporting and accountability mechanisms.

It will establish a residents' bill of rights that includes the right to participate fully in any decision concerning any aspect of his or her care, to be informed about the cost of care services and any increases in charges for these services and to receive information about and access to external care providers, including publicly funded providers. It would also set province-wide safety and care standards appropriate to the services provided in each retirement home, and it would establish safeguards for residents by requiring homes to protect residents against abuse or neglect and defining employee screening and training requirements.

We're talking about a retirement home being defined as a residential complex or part of a residential complex consisting of rental units that is "occupied primarily by persons who are 65 years of age or older ... in which at least the prescribed number of persons reside who are not related to the operator of the home, and ... where the operator of the home makes at least two care services available, directly or indirectly, to the residents."

On the face, there's nothing wrong with this, but when you start to take a look at the changes that are being proposed within this legislation, you could almost arrive at a conclusion that the government is proposing that these retirement homes, which will be paid for by the men and women who occupy them, will, in some respects, make up for the lack of long-term-care beds that are available in long-term-care facilities.

There is a little bit of concern because, of course, currently in the province of Ontario, we have a crisis when it comes to long-term-care beds. This government has never, ever developed a long-term plan for long-term-care homes. The last time a long-term-care plan was developed for these homes was in 1998, when, after 10 years of no new action, no new construction or anybody building new long-term-care homes, our government made the decision that we would construct, after doing a thorough analysis, 20,000 new long-term-care beds because we needed the spaces. This government was very happy, the first few years after 2003, to attend the opening of the homes that we had actually announced were going to be built. In fact, to this day they continue to try to take credit for about 3,000 beds that opened after we were no longer in office.

Since that time, despite that fact, the demand for long-term-care beds has increased to the point where there are

now about 25,000 or 26,000 people waiting in the province of Ontario, and that is up from about 12,000 in 2005. There's just no space.

In some respects, you can take a look at what the government is trying to do in regulating retirement homes, and you can come to a conclusion that perhaps this is the government's way of responding to the crisis—in other words, the shortage of long-term-care beds—and if we can regulate these retirement homes, we can put people into them. In a long-term-care home, of course, people are subsidized by the province. In these retirement homes, people would be using their own dollars in order to access the residence and also to access the services.

I think there's a little bit of suspicion about what might be part of the motivation behind the regulation of the retirement homes because we haven't heard the government announce yet any plan to build more long-term-care beds. As I said, we are short 25,000 to 26,000 beds.

In fact, the government's unwillingness to come forward with a long-term plan for new long-term-care beds in the province of Ontario has contributed to a very serious problem in our hospitals. Currently, 17% of our hospital beds are occupied by what we call ALC patients. These are alternative-level-of-care patients who would more appropriately belong in a long-term-care home or at home if this government were able to provide the services at home that it has indicated it would, or maybe they would be somewhere else in respite or complex care.

1620

We currently have a government that is perhaps trying to deal with accommodating our senior population but is doing it in a way that seniors will continue to have to pay for this accommodation and for any services that are provided to them. It doesn't appear that there's any willingness on the part of the government—we're now in 2010, and since 2003 they haven't announced any new plan for any new long-term-care beds, so this could well be the solution. People will be paying for their accommodation.

We know that, just as the shortage of long-term-care beds has increased from about 12,000 to almost 26,000 today in a period of five years from 2005, the boomer tsunami that is hitting us will simply continue to provide us with an even more desperate need to provide for our aging population.

What we're seeing here, in some respects, is an attempt by the government, through the back door, to not provide the publicly funded long-term-care homes but to introduce a form of privatization of long-term-care facilities. Of course, it would also help the government meet some of the challenges within our health care system, and that's what is so regrettable.

We all know there's a challenge: The system as we know it today is simply not sustainable. Yet this government, despite the promises it has made, has never since 2003 come out with a long-term plan for health. George Smitherman stood here many times indicating that he



was going to introduce a long-term strategic plan for health. When the LHINs were introduced, they told the LHINs, "We know you don't know where you're going or what you're supposed to do, but we are going to introduce a provincial long-term strategic plan. It will identify what the objectives are, what the needs are that we must address. We're going to speak, in the 10-year plan, to how we're going to achieve those objectives," and then the government was going to measure whether or not they were meeting their goals.

That was in 2007, and we're now in 2010. The 14 LHINs continue to operate without any plan, and we know that about half of them didn't even identify a few years ago, when they were doing their surveys, that seniors were going to be a priority for the LHINs. So again we've got 14 bureaucracies, all operating independently, that aren't really aware of what the government is going to do over the long term. Obviously, it's very wasteful to be spending money and trying to put out fires without a long-term plan.

Now you've got the government moving forward with these retirement homes. Maybe it's like what they're doing with pharmacists. Do you know what? They want to cut costs, but they don't have an overall strategic plan. Of course, we've now heard them talk about what they're going to do to hospitals: reduce some of the funding that currently goes to hospitals.

I would say to this government that rather than attacking or focusing on one group or one area, why don't you do what you were going to do; that is, show us and show the public—they deserve to know—how you are going to ensure that the health care services that are needed for people are going to be available to them over the long term?

Your finance minister and your Premier have both said that if changes don't occur, we're going to be spending 70 cents of every dollar on health care in the not-too-distant future. We all know that's not sustainable. But at the same time, you've also said, "We're not going to increase taxes, and we're not going to allow privatization," but you've done both. In fact, the first thing you ever did was introduce a new health tax right after the 2003 election, after your Premier said he wasn't going to raise taxes. You've now got in your general coffers about \$15 billion that you have collected from the pockets of the people in the province of Ontario, despite the fact that you said you weren't going to raise taxes. Then, of course, when it comes to privatization, again you said, "Oh, no, we're not going to privatize." You know what? Physiotherapy services were eliminated, and we certainly know that chiropractic services were eliminated from the public funding.

So again, the government has not been forthright with people in the province of Ontario. In this case, retirement homes: This may well be your attempt to privatize for those people who have less complex needs, and more or less force them into retirement homes, where they're going to have to pay for living if they no longer think that they can live independently at home. Of course, part of

the reason people can't live independently at home is, despite the promises that were made about aging at home, being able to live at home, having community services available, you just have to call up the CCAC in your community and you will find out very soon that there is no help available to you.

In fact, I know a woman who last week had been in the hospital for a week and a half. She was told she could have community care services. Guess what? When she was ready for discharge, finally this week, she was told no, that there was not going to be any support, but she was going to have to find somewhere else to live because she couldn't yet go home. She's now in a retirement home, and she is going to be paying a tremendous amount of money out of her own pocket because, despite what the government said about community support and help being available in your own home, that is simply not happening. I learned early this morning when I got a call from the family that they have been able to find a private home where she can go. She will be paying about \$3,000 a month for respite until she can return to her own home.

So I think this government needs to be honest with people. The health system isn't sustainable. We're going to have to be creative, but we're also going to have to identify a long-term strategy for the health system because I think the public is losing confidence in our health system. The government has so often said one thing and done another. Maybe the public understands that many of our services have always been privatized. They've had to pay for them, or they've been delivered by the private sector. They're probably way ahead of us, but don't keep saying, "We don't allow anything but public delivery of services." Look at the silly thing you did with the MRIs that were being operated when you came into office by private individuals but were publicly funded, and some of the silly games that you played. Take a look at the P3 hospitals. Oh, you were going to do away with them. We all know what happened. It's not true.

Be honest with people. Acknowledge that there are problems with the health system. We probably can't be all things to everybody. Let's have an honest debate, because everybody realizes that 70 cents on the dollar is not sustainable. So when you take a look at this piece of legislation, which, at the end of the day, is going to make sure that people are provided for within retirement homes and that our retirement homes are regulated, I hope that you're not doing it with the intent of somehow addressing the shortage of long-term-care homes. You need to realize that people today are living longer, and people today have much more complex care needs than ever before. You are going to have to make sure that there is accommodation available for them. But at least be honest. If you want people to pay for it themselves, say so, because at some point maybe we're going to have to have the debate that the system, as we know it today, isn't sustainable.

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But it's like the pharmacy and what you're doing there. People are going to be forced, for example, to pay



for the delivery of drugs. Again, it's the way it has been approached. I think your government had an opportunity to sit down and engage in some consultations with the pharmacy players and the association, but again the government seems to have unilaterally made some decision. I don't know that people really understand what's at stake here, but the unfortunate reality is that patients are now suffering the consequences of a war that seems to be being waged between the government and between some of the pharmacy players.

The only one who's hurt at the end of the day is the public. They don't know what the government is trying to do. You're telling them you're trying to cut costs, but they really don't understand what's going on. As I say, some older people now who won't have drugs delivered to their home any more or who have to pay a bigger fee—you know what? They can't afford it. But be up-front with them. What are you trying to do? Why didn't you talk to the people in pharmacy? Why didn't you reach some sort of a compromise, some sort of solution that everybody could live with? I think everybody understands that the cost of drugs—it's expensive. What can we do to somehow deal with that issue?

Unfortunately, the way it has been dealt with has meant that the one person who is going to be suffering is the person, probably the older person who uses a lot of drugs, and it appears the other person who is going to suffer is the small pharmacist in rural northern Ontario or somebody within my community who simply has a pharmacy, doesn't sell the groceries, doesn't sell the makeup and everything else that goes with it.

It seems that this initiative to go after the players in the pharmaceutical field seems to have hit a lot of unintended targets, and I think that could have been addressed if the government had sat down and had a conversation with some of the people involved.

I will be supporting the bill that we're debating, Bill 21, but I'll wait and see whether or not this is simply a back door to replacing some of the long-term-care facilities and making our seniors pay for their own beds and residences in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened carefully to Ms. Witmer, and although I heard her say that the Conservative caucus is going to support this and the New Democrats will not be opposing it—let's note that this is on second reading only; it's in principle. There's a whole lot that has got to be done with this piece of legislation in committee before it becomes anything that the government purports it to be.

I'm going to have a chance in just a few minutes, perhaps eight minutes, to speak to this, and I've highlighted some of the areas of the bill that I want to focus on.

There are shocking omissions, and indeed parts of the bill create an impression that something is being done when, in fact, nothing is being done. It's lip service, less than lip service, to the rights of seniors living in these homes.

Let's understand what the bill is about, and this is simply the way it is. This bill is the foundation of the growth and expansion of seniors' care by private, for-profit corporations here in the province of Ontario. Let me tell you, I come from down in Niagara. You know that. The American and American-style for-profit residential and care providers are lined up over at the border, over at Buffalo there, down Highway I-90, three or four miles long, waiting to come into Canada and reap the profits at the expense of our seniors and send those profits back to the Cayman Islands, where those people hoard their money.

This bill has some very dangerous qualities to it, and I look forward to the opportunity to expand on those in short order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I'm very pleased to add my voice in support of the bill and to compliment the minister responsible for seniors for bringing this forward.

I hear what the opposition is saying. I heard from the member for Kitchener–Waterloo that she's willing to support the bill—I'm pleased to hear that—and expressing some concerns at the same time.

The fact is that, yes, we have been dealing with these issues for a long time, but it is here. Call it a first step. Call it an important step with, yes indeed, some more to go. But the fact is that the bill is here today, and it deserves support and deserves that we send it forward so we can provide seniors and their families with peace of mind in the type of care they need and support. The government recognizes that, and again I compliment the Minister of Health for doing that.

We have some 800 homes in Ontario with some 40,000 occupants. I think we all know that in the next 15 to 20 years, one quarter of the Ontario population is going to be 65 and over. I think it is time that we give seniors and their families peace of mind to know that there is protection.

The bill does exactly what the opposition is looking for: It establishes mandatory care and safety standards. You may say, "Why didn't we do this before?" Well, we are doing it now. It includes a required emergency plan, infection control, prevention programs, assessment of care needs and care planning, and police background checks and training for staff. It establishes very important things they've been looking for for a long time. Residents' rights are included, and the right to know what type of care and how much it costs, which is part of the government saying all along that we need transparency in all we do. This is a big first step.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I commend Minister Phillips, the minister responsible for seniors, for bringing this forward. I have discussed this bill. In fact, Bill 21 is something that's probably long overdue. But it does have a downside; that is, it could be the slippery slope of privatization of long-term care. Retirement homes aren't



long-term-care homes, and they are not regulated today, but they should be regulated.

Once you start introducing such things as a care plan but there's no government money, unlike long-term care that has government money attached to those regulated beds—I just want to add, in respect to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, that she has great insight, knowledge and suggestions. I would encourage the minister to send this to committee and work with people like Ms. Witmer and others.

I want them to reconsider my Bill 3 today, which was really another small method that had been agreed to unanimously by the Liberals, the NDP and the Conservatives to go to committee prior to prorogation by the Premier. I ask them, in their legislation, to look at the power of attorney issue in those homes. It might be assumed, or it could be signed by these private home operators, that they have assumed a power of attorney role for personal care. Do you see the slope we're getting on here? I think they're missing the boat on some of the opportunities to deal with elder abuse and elderly decision-making or support of elder living in an era when we have the baby boomer cohort moving along.

There's not enough strength in the current protections for our seniors in this province, and this is one more case where the government is failing seniors. I don't say it in a malicious way; I say it as a warning to take the time to strengthen it. My bill is only a structured piece to give you the tools or the mandate from our side, from our leader, Tim Hudak, and our deputy leader, Elizabeth Witmer—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It will be my honour and privilege as well to speak to this bill at greater length further on. Suffice to say, in reaction to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the member from Welland, that certainly they're on to something, and what they're on to is what is not being stated in the spin on this bill but what is actually in this bill; that is, a kind of drift to privatization.

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I'm going to share with the assembly here some horror stories from my experience as a United Church minister with seniors in for-profit retirement homes, and, quite frankly, how this bill is not going to touch the horror of those stories. In fact, it would not mitigate them at all. I look forward to sharing some stories, stories that have plagued our community.

I also look forward to bringing forth the position of the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, or ACE, which has grave concerns about this bill, which feels that this is, perhaps, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to actually do something about regulating for-profit retirement homes, and that it will be missed if the bill is not strengthened and if aspects that they have brought forward are not put in the bill.

So, yes, do we want to see regulation? Absolutely. Do we agree with the government on that? Absolutely. Do we think this bill fulfills the mandate for caring for our

seniors, for making sure that they're protected—for protecting, as the member from Durham said, not only their assets but their very beings, their lives? No, it doesn't, on a number of fronts. That's why it needs to go to committee, that's why it needs to be strengthened, and that's why the government needs to listen to people like ACE and other seniors' groups, registered nurses, fire chiefs and others who have very viable concerns that should be incorporated. I look forward to speaking to that at some length.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Kitchener–Waterloo has up to two minutes for her response.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I want to thank the members from Welland, York West, Durham and Parkdale–High Park.

As I indicated, I do support the principle of the bill, and I have a lot of respect and admiration for the minister who has brought the legislation forward. I know that he has certainly done so in a manner to ensure that those people who are going to be living in the retirement homes are protected, are looked after and that their rights will be taken into consideration. I know this bill will probably go out to committee, and at that time, if there are concerns that the public has, which there will be—we know there are always concerns with all legislation—hopefully we can make sure that those concerns are addressed.

At the end of the day, as I say, I support this bill in principle as it is, and hopefully we can have legislation which will protect the public and will be as I'm sure the minister intended it to be.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** At the outset, let's make it clear that if one is very wealthy, one has little need for state-sponsored regulation of the retirement home industry. If one has all of one's faculties and is assertive and comfortable in the culture, then one has little need for state-sponsored regulation of the private, for-profit retirement home industry. I suppose that even if one has a strong family support or the support of friends or neighbours who will assist one while they live in a private, for-profit retirement home—once again, while one's own skills may have begun to weaken, that person can still rely upon the skills, the assertiveness and the advocacy of family, friends or neighbours.

I, like everybody else here, have been in many retirement home settings, public and private, for-profit homes. Down in Niagara where I come from, we have a very strong and historic system of public retirement homes. As a matter of fact, for the last 40 years I've watched Doug Rapelje, who is a director of those homes on behalf of the region, develop those homes and the programs in them. He is acknowledged internationally as a person with great expertise in geriatrics in general and in developing homes/housing for seniors. Now, is the capacity anywhere near enough? Of course not. And is the ability of the property taxpayer sufficient to invest the levels of



investment that we need, especially when one considers—I had occasion to say this the other day; we heard it said again today. It's 2010. In one more year, 2011—you do the math and allow nine months for the gestation period—the first of the baby boomers is going to be turning 65. That is an incredible population of Ontarians who are going to put demand on services for seniors the likes of which have never been seen before in any of our lives. These seniors, the baby boomers, are by and large the best-educated generation of Ontarians, and they are going to be the—to date—longest-living generation of Ontarians, except for Rahim Jaffer. With his drinking and cocaine habits, I'm sure he's going to die well before his actuarial death age.

So, as I had the opportunity to say the other day, we ain't seen nothing yet. It is inescapable. The observation is unavoidable that this legislation provides the foundation for a growing private, for-profit seniors' services industry, and this purported regulation signals that clearly.

It also signals to the private, for-profit—let's understand. Let's be very clear. Let's understand this from the get-go. The motivation in a publicly sponsored system—in the public homes that Doug Rapelje ran for so many years that now are being run by capable people, some of them acolytes of his—is to provide the best possible care for our folks or our grandfolks upon their retirement years when they can no longer live in their own homes. It's a very simple view, but I think it says it in and of itself. But let's also understand that—and we are no longer talking about the little mom-and-pop operation. It used to be, in years gone by—and you and I have both of them in our smaller communities where a couple, with or without expertise, with a large, older-style house, would say, “Look, why don't we bring in some seniors? We can take care of them and they'll help us stay in our home or help us pay the bills.” Some families decided to do bed and breakfasts; historically, some families decided to accommodate seniors; other families accommodated students, if they lived in college or university towns. That's the private retirement home at its most simple level. Again, some of those were very good and some were atrocious. That's understood as well.

But we're not talking about that. That's not the seniors' services industry that we're going to have foisted on us. We're talking about big corporations, publicly traded corporations, corporations that have their head offices far from Ontario and corporations whose accountability is not to residents in homes but to shareholders in terms of profits. It's not rocket science. You don't have to have an MBA to understand the fundamentals of making profit in that type of industry. You charge the maximum amount that you can for your services and you reduce your overhead to the least possible amount. That's how you maximize profit. That, too, isn't rocket science, but it does illustrate that the bottom line for the corporate, increasingly multinational, for-profit, profit-driven, seniors' service providers is profit, and that's what this bill deals with here.

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If this were a perfect world, if the market worked to provide quality care, we wouldn't need regulation, would we? We can see that the market doesn't work to provide quality care. The market can maximize profit, but they won't provide quality care, especially when you're dealing with seniors who don't fit into one of those categories that I first listed, although the list may not be finessed particularly well—the list of wealthy, capable or powerful people, people who have power in their own right.

People, as they age and acquire some of the characteristics of aging, sometimes lose their power. We had occasion earlier today, when Mr. O'Toole's bill was being discussed, to talk about folks with dementia, Alzheimer's, amongst other things, because you see, there are huge profits to be made for the private, for-profit corporate sector in caring for people with dementia and Alzheimer's. You need very little programming, from their point of view. Hell, you don't even have to have a bingo game.

Many of us who aren't familiar with Alzheimer's, although most of us have encountered it one way or another either in family or through our friends and neighbours—people, when they first encounter the wings, the parts of long-term-care facilities that care for people with Alzheimer's, even the very best of them, are shocked, taken aback by the conditions. I'm not talking about filth; I'm not talking about the locked doors; I'm just talking about the incomprehensible level of functioning, because there are levels of functioning. “The unsearchable” I suspect is the best term, perhaps, Mr. Levac, would it be?—the unsearchable level of functioning, because that's one of the frustrating things about relating to somebody with Alzheimer's: Something is happening there, but you don't know what it is. It's very hard, especially for untrained people, lay people, to connect in a way that you would like to. So there's an unsearchable level of functioning.

I've only got 10 minutes. Let's take a look at the act. Oh, the regulatory authority—Ian Scott, many, many years ago, long before he was the Attorney General of this province, wrote an essay that has been published, and I took great delight in reminding Mr. Scott, when he was Attorney General, of this article that he had written during the auto insurance debates, because Ian Scott proposed—and his argument was bolstered by all sorts of unavoidable facts and irrefutable facts—that the industry to be regulated soon acquires control over the regulatory body, especially when you've got a self-regulatory system. What can I refer to—the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the Law Society of Upper Canada, the insurance industry and any other number of similar bodies.

What have we got here? We've got a bill that hands over the power right from the get-go. There's not even any pretending here. Nobody's trying to fool anybody, because the act, under “regulatory authority,” says, “The authority shall have a board of directors” which happens



to be nine, and that's, in and of itself, not troubling, but you turn over to subsection 12(5) and you see that the act specifically states that the public appointments to the board, the members of the authority that are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, "do not constitute a majority...."

Let's put that into real English: It means that the bill guarantees that the industry will always have a majority of representatives on that authority.

So Colonel Sanders is in charge of the chicken coop one more time. I've had far too many occasions to use that phrase here at Queen's Park over the course of, some would probably say, far too many years. We've got a government that guarantees that the industry is going to have control of its authority. No kidding. Does TSSA ring a bell? Does the Technical Standards and Safety Authority mean anything to you? Does Minister Takhar—now the Minister of Government Services—when he was minister of that ring a bell for you? This self-regulatory body, controlled by the industry that it purported to regulate, simply wasn't regulated. Hell, it wasn't even inspected. Now we have a dead young man and thousands of other Ontarians who but for the grace of God didn't die in the Sunrise propane explosion because the TSSA self-regulatory body—look, the industry has no interest in being tough with itself. If industry didn't need regulation, we wouldn't have to talk regulation. If we're going to talk about regulation, why are we talking about self-regulation? This bill guarantees that the industry will always control, will always dominate the authority that the government tells us is going to be responsible for regulating this retirement home industry.

Let's move on to section 51, the proposed charter of rights. Charter of rights? Holy moly, that leaves some sort of impression, good grief, of something that's superior, that should be up there on the altar being worshiped. What's the charter of rights worth if there's no meaningful way of enforcing it? Take a look at the charter rights: all broad statements, pretty fancy—oh, and it's going to be posted on the walls of these retirement homes. They could probably hire those people who make the fancy letter work—what do they call those people?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Calligraphers.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** —calligraphers to make it look like some old British document like the Magna Carta; they could give the fake Magna Carta look to it.

If you take a look at subsection (3) of section 51, look what the enforcement standard is for the charter of rights: "A resident of a retirement home may enforce the residents' bill of rights against the licensee of the home as though the resident and the licensee had entered into a contract under which the licensee had agreed to fully respect and promote the rights set out in the residents' bill of rights."

Well, there are a couple of lawyers around here who know more about that kind of law than I do. How do you enforce a contract? You sue in the courts. You hire a lawyer. Good grief. It makes it quite clear that the authority doesn't have the responsibility for enforcing the

charter of rights; it's up to the resident to enforce it as if it were a contract. So you take \$10,000 as your retainer down to some law firm, if you can get down there, and then as disbursements happen, you pay \$10,000 and \$10,000 and \$10,000 more, and then you wait six years. These are people in retirement homes. These are people in the senior years. Do you know what the backlog is down at University Avenue there for lawsuits? The odds are you're going to be dead, because you're old to begin with, huh? Let's be brutally frank here: You're old to begin with. That's why you're in a retirement home. You're not young anymore; you're not serving as a page here at Queen's Park. You might be a member, but you're certainly not young; you're closer to dying than you are to being born.

Some enforcement—and no advocacy whatsoever. How does a person with Alzheimer's enforce their so-called rights under this bill of rights? How does a person who has lost their sight or their mobility enforce their rights under this so-called bill of rights?

**1700**

Why is there no advocate for residents in retirement homes under this legislation? Because the legislation, after even the most modest of scrutiny, is exposed as something of a sham. Oh, and there's—some of this stuff has the quality of a high school social committee, as if they're going to hang crepe paper and make those little flowers out of crepe paper or tissue paper or whatever for the school dance because, after all, the legislation allows for the creation of a residents' council.

I'm reminded of this government's legislation and the previous Conservative government's legislation—remember?—when it came to farm workers and their right to bargain. This government and the previous government tried to circumvent the rulings of the appellate courts by saying that farm workers can form workers' councils and they can talk to the boss. That's a far cry from collective bargaining, ain't it, Speaker? And the council can—this was just sweet—attempt to resolve disputes between the licensee and residents. Oh, let's get in a mediator. Oh, for Pete's sake. Isn't anybody embarrassed about that? They can attempt to resolve disputes.

This government is crowing about its bill of rights as if somehow they had written Magna Carta 2, like a bad Johnny Depp sequel, when they haven't even come close. As a matter of fact, your time would be better spent watching a Johnny Depp sequel than it would investigating anything in this legislation.

The offences, when you take a look at section 98, and I haven't had the benefit of committee hearings yet—nobody has—you've got operators without a licence, reduction in care service, ceasing to operate a retirement home, interference with an external care provider, protection from abuse and neglect, compliance with inspections. There's one section, section 60, compliance with care and safety standards. We don't know what those are, because they're going to be by regulation. Those are secret. How many baths per week were seniors promised



in long-term-care facilities by the wannabe mayor of Toronto, Rocco Rossi? No, he wasn't—it was George Smitherman.

We've seen this movie before. It was a bad movie then; it's a bad movie now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Questions or comments?

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** It's my pleasure to stand and join in the debate and the discussion on Bill 21, the Retirement Homes Act, and to respond to a comment or two made by the member from Welland. In my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, we have 12 to 15 retirement homes, and it's of significant importance, this bill, to the people, my constituents in my riding and, in fact, my parents. There's a common saying that life begins at retirement, and it's important that we look at the importance of an act like this to make sure that that happens for the people of Ontario.

The member from Welland called the bill a sham, and I just want to go over some of the important things in this bill and be careful to establish that this is anything but a sham. In fact, it creates the regulatory authority, which he referred to, to license homes, to conduct inspections, to have investigations and enforcement, including financial penalties and revoking licences if necessary. It also establishes safety standards, and that is so important, safety standards that we have in schools that will now—emergency plans, infection control, prevention programs, background checks. This is a consistency that is so important for our retirement homes in the province. We need to provide safety standards and emergency plans and have transparency. The bill establishes residents' rights, including the right to know the true cost of care and accommodation. If families want to make informed decisions, there needs to be a transparency, and families need to know. You can't make informed decisions if you don't have all of the information.

So for this and a whole host of other reasons, it's an excellent bill, and I support Bill 21.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further questions or comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure to stand. It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Welland. He keeps us awake: Let's face it: It's 5 o'clock on a Thursday afternoon. He's entertaining.

A couple of points he made which are far beyond entertainment about the charters of rights and about residents' councils: Quite frankly, as a United Church minister, I've been in and out of retirement homes and long-term-care homes for my entire working life, and I have yet to be in a private one that doesn't have a charter of rights and that doesn't have a residents' council. These are already *de rigueur* in private, for-profit homes. The best ones don't need them, and the worst ones are completely ineffective, just like the member said.

To get back to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga: Of course this all sounds good, but what the member from Welland talked about is that it sounds good, but how do you enforce it? Who enforces it? That's what he

was talking about. It's one thing to have a charter of rights; it's another thing to enforce a charter of rights. It's one thing to have a residents' council, but if it means that you're wheeling four people with Alzheimer's into a circle once a week and then wheeling them back to their locked-up rooms, it doesn't work.

The member talked about if your only recourse is through the civil litigation method, you have no recourse. We've seen this before. We've seen in it other self-regulated industries. We've seen with it disastrous results, as we have seen in for-profit retirement homes. The best one could expect in an industry that self-regulates is that the big dogs eat the little dogs, that the big, expensive, well-run places already drive their competitors out of business. That's really what you're setting up here. This has, of course, happened in other places.

What we're talking about here is having advocates on this regulatory body in the majority. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about not morphing into a private, for-profit health care system, which is also a possibility under this act. We're talking about the individual lives of seniors, at the end of the day. We need to keep them safe. This bill doesn't.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further questions or comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Again, we do need a regulatory body. Seniors in retirement homes are looking for it and they've been asking for it. I would say to the House, let's move on with it.

To the member from Welland: passionate as always, but skeptical some of the time. Who can disagree with that? But the fact is, if you don't have a regulatory body, you cannot go in some of those homes and put your foot down. The last couple of months, without saying the last few years, I've been in and out of nursing homes, retirement homes, and I have seen good and bad.

With all due respect to the member from Welland, we cannot compare those homes where people can afford the \$3,000, \$4,000, \$5,000 a month. We are not comparing to those. We are looking for regulatory residences for everyone. If the rich ones want to go there, let them go. They will have to live according to it. But this aims to provide safety, security, and a good standard of care and living for all our seniors.

This has been a long time coming, friends. This didn't originate yesterday. The past two or three ministers responsible for seniors have been dwelling on this. Some 800 people have been heard on this. I was not part of the consultation, but I know that extensive consultation has been had on this particular piece of legislation. And I would hope that not only do we approve the bill as it has been presented, but that we are going to make it even better as we move it along.

On behalf of the minister, I hope that the House will move this forward today.

1710

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?



**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I had the opportunity to listen intently to the member from Welland speaking to this bill. I have to agree with him as he started off with suggesting, as was just mentioned by the member from York West, that this may be a good start but there need to be a lot of changes made to the bill to make it work properly.

I think one of the biggest challenges we see here as we move forward to regulate retirement homes as we regulate nursing homes is that we can't overlook the fact that government controls and funds the nursing homes, and the majority of the retirement homes are not institutions where people live institutionally. They're people's homes. They're not the same thing, so if you're going to put regulations in place, you have to put them in so the people who live there can make sure that the regulations and the things that they are guaranteed as they're going in are going to be available to them and that they can achieve them. I think that's what I got out of the presentation from the member from Welland, that it says, "Yes, we can set up all these rights that you have, but we're not going to provide you any way to have them enforced or to have them imposed." In fact, a lot of these people may not be in the position to even know that they have those rights, so I think that the government needs to do much more to facilitate the implementation of the standards that they want to set in these homes.

I think we have to remember that where we're starting from is that the standard is that they are like a single-family residence. These people live in their own residence; they just get some assistance from the landlord in their day-to-day living. We need to change that structure. If the government is going to regulate that, then they must have the ability to enforce it and it to oversee that these things are actually happening. I very much appreciate the comments and I advise the government that, as we will be supporting it, we will look forward to changes being made.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The member for Welland has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** If the mother of the member for Kitchener-Conestoga is watching, I simply want to say hello and I appreciate you watching.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** Oh, she's in Florida, Peter.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** If you're not watching, your daughter will give you a DVD of this afternoon and make sure you get it delivered wherever you happen to be on vacation.

**Fact:** We're going to have a huge growth in the number of retirees/seniors/elderly commencing next year because of the baby boomers turning 65. **Fact:** To my regret, there isn't the political will by this government to ensure that there's an adequate level of investment in public sector non-profit seniors' accommodations, seniors' residences. We believe that people have a right to choose to go into the private sector or not.

That choice won't be available for a whole lot of people, especially people of more modest means, because there won't be sufficient public capacity. *Prima facie*,

seniors' care is expensive—quality seniors' care is expensive—so it's about the huge growth in lower-priced seniors' care where the margin of profit becomes narrower and narrower and where the motivation to cut, cut, cut becomes stronger and stronger. Those are the people who are going to be most at risk.

This government doesn't regulate anything with this legislation. How do you regulate? You know how to regulate. You regulate by having a ministry responsible for the supervision of this industry, by having trained inspectors as law enforcement officers visiting these institutions on a regular basis, inspecting them and ensuring that there's compliance with strong standards. That isn't what this bill provides for. This is self-regulation. I repeat again: Remember TSSA and its embarrassing legacy, its pathetic and deadly legacy. One death in a propane explosion; there will be many more with this model of regulation of the seniors' sector.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure to rise. First let me say that I have a great deal of regard for Minister Phillips. I have a great deal of regard for, I think, the impetus behind this bill, which is to do something. It's to do something that needs to be done, and that's to regulate an unregulated industry. But you know where I'm going to go, which is the same place the member from Welland went, which is that this is not the way to do it. Although we will be supporting the bill, because at least it gives us a framework in which to move forward, we hope to move forward in committee by listening to the people who weren't listened to, quite frankly, to get us to this point, people like the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly. Let me read what they have said. First of all, about the consultation process, they wrote:

"I am writing to you to express our concerns in respect to the consultation on regulating the retirement home industry that has been conducted by the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. Although we have long encouraged greater regulation of retirement homes, we do not believe that the present consultation and any proposal coming from this consultation will provide appropriate regulation of this industry or appropriate protections for the tenants who live in this type of accommodation."

They go on to say, "Originally we assumed that the consultation would be in respect to retirement homes in a continuum, but after attending a consultation, it would appear that the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat and the retirement industry want to promote a particular understanding of 'aging in place,' which we take to mean that retirement homes could offer the same level of care services as long-term-care homes as long as the tenants were willing to pay privately for that care. If that is the case"—and I emphasize this because they wrote it in bold—"that would mean, in our opinion, that the government intends to promote what is, in effect, two-tier medicine." That's what the advocacy centre said.

Also, people who have not had responses to their concerns include the fire chiefs of Ontario, waiting for a



response from the ministry; seniors' organizations of a variety of sorts waiting for a response; SEIU, ONA, CUPE, OPSEU waiting for a response; Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, also waiting for a response. Clearly, whatever consultation went into where we're at right now in this bill was not extensive enough to include the very groups whose major mandate is actually providing this kind of care. They need to be listened to. They need to be listened to in committee and listened to extensively, and their recommendations need to be brought forward. I would assert that their recommendations fall under a number of generalized themes.

Before I talk about those themes, I want to tell you some stories, because, my goodness, it's 5:15 and we're tired. These are real stories that I've experienced from real seniors in my real care and others. I want to say, quite frankly: real kudos to ministry staff, and by that I mean pastors in ministry, in congregations, in faith communities, who often are among the only people—the only people—who walk into retirement homes and long-term-care homes on a regular basis, get to know the people in there, provide services for them—often mandated services—speak to them, visit them. Most people in retirement homes and long-term-care homes don't get visitors. That alone is a safety factor. If you speak to the pastors in your community, if you speak to the ministers and the priests who perform services in long-term-care homes and retirement homes, they will give you an earful about what they've seen, what they've witnessed and what's needed. In fact, there's another group that could be consulted and would be saying somewhat of the same things I'm going to say.

Let me tell you about Mary. Mary was a wonderful woman, a mother of five children, grandmother to 20 children, active in her church, active in her community, worked hard all her life. Her husband died, as so often happens, because remember, when we're talking about long-term-care homes and retirement homes, we're talking about a population that's mainly made up of frail women. So here's Mary. Mary was one of the lucky ones. Mary owned a house, and she owned a house in the High Park area, so the house was actually quite valuable—bought it when it wasn't, and it increased in value. Because she had her house, she was able to afford—not to pay the interest, but by liquidating the principal of her house, which means, of course, that money didn't go to her kids or her grandchildren; it went into her care—to pay for one of the best private, for-profit retirement homes. It's a wonderful home. It's in my riding. I used to do services there. Wonderful care, wonderful food, wonderful facilities—big price tag. I think the last time I checked, \$5,000 to \$6,000 a month is what is charged to seniors.

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Here was Mary's problem. Mary's problem, if you can call it that, is that she lived too long. She outlived the equity in her home. She moved, first of all, into a one-bedroom suite that was even pricier, and as her faculties

failed and she needed greater care, the price tag went up, needless to say. It didn't take too many years before the principal was gone of that primary residence.

Again, this is a strong woman, a smart woman—never any question that this woman didn't have all of her faculties. No issues there.

But what happened when she ran out of money, when she'd spent all the money in her home? She had to be moved to, again, another home that wasn't so good, that cost a lot less, where she was housed in a semi-private room with a person with schizophrenia. And guess what happened to Mary? Within six months, she was beginning to lose her faculties. Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you, if that was your living situation? All night long she listened to the screaming and the yelling of the woman in the bed next to her. Maybe she got some care; maybe she didn't. Hard-working nurses and staff, but overworked, underpaid, couldn't get to her all the time in time—which is often the story you will hear if you go into places like Mary was in, retirement homes morphing into long-term-care homes, which is what we're talking about—and she passed away. The question is, would she have lived a little longer if she had lived in some degree of dignity? I and her family say, "Yes." It's sad.

Now think about the tsunami of boomers that we're faced with, the tsunami of Marys—and they're the lucky ones, again; they're the ones with some kind of equity that they can spend. What about the ones that go straight to the second-tier for-profit retirement home, that don't pass go, that don't get to stay in the good care, with the good food, with the good service, the good facilities? No, they go right into the room with the woman with dementia in the next bed yelling all night. What about them? And what about if those folks were your relatives or, in fact, maybe even you one day? That's what we're talking about here.

Let me tell you about Bob. Bob: great guy. I was down in Florida. I took a taxi to the airport with my daughter; we were just on holiday there. The guy behind the wheel looked awfully old to be driving a cab; made us feel a little unsafe. I started chatting to him about conditions down there; horrible conditions down there, as we all know, because of the recession. We asked him, "Bob, how old are you?" He said, "82." I said, "Bob, what are you doing driving a cab at 82? You should be lying on the beach out there, walking down the boardwalk, enjoying yourself." Bob said, "I used to be a small business owner. Because of the recession, I lost the business. I didn't have any savings, and every retirement home around here charges. There aren't any beds for people like me. If I don't work, I don't eat."

We could go off on a tangent about pension plans—not such a tangent; it's very apropos to this conversation—but is that what we want for our parents? Is that what we want for ourselves—and I've joked in here before: the Freedom 95 plan? Is that what we want? No.

So this is the bill, our last little glimmer of hope here in this House to actually step in and do something for the folk in these homes. We're not talking about the first



home Mary was in; we're talking about the second home she found herself in. We're talking about the homes that most people in Ontario—think about it—might find themselves in. That's a really frightening thought. That's a frightening thought, because who has \$5,000 or \$6,000, \$7,000 or \$8,000 a month to spend on their accommodation when they're aging? Who has that kind of money?

Here are the problems, and I hope, I sincerely hope that at committee these problems are addressed. I live in hope. Mr. Phillips knows that about me: I live in hope. We live in hope that the right people, all those people haven't been heard yet in consultations—I listed them—all of those people who have not only a vested interest but a vested concern for seniors—that's their life work, seniors—should be heard.

Here's what they'll tell you, and I can tell you what they'll tell you. They'll tell you, one, that regulatory bodies, as you've heard from the member from Welland, need to be the voices of the consumer, not the voices of the industry that services the consumer. That's number one. And they need to be overseen. As the member from Welland said, you need a ministry to stand up, take responsibility, hire the necessary inspectors to go in and make the inspections, and then follow through on what they find. If you let the industry regulate itself, in what possible way is that any different from what we already have? That's what we have already: a self-regulating industry with the occasional residents' council. They all have their charter of the rights of residents up on the wall. Walk into them and find one that doesn't already. We not only have the example of TSSA, as the member from Welland pointed out; we've got Tarion. There's a great self-regulatory body. Talk to owners of new condos and new homes about how well that industry-based oversight committee works, and they'll tell you that it doesn't at all.

Who should be on as consumer advocates? Well, a whole list of people. You've got the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly. There's an advocacy centre. There are a number of advocates for the elderly. Why shouldn't they be on the regulatory body? You've got CARP. Why shouldn't CARP be on the regulatory body? These people, whose very mandate it is to protect our seniors, should be on that body.

Then you've got the second concern, which ACE already outlined and that I hope isn't true—this is akin to a conspiracy theory. Let's hope it's not true, but members in this House have already pointed to it; that is, perhaps this bill is just kind of a smokescreen, a cover for the morphing into private, for-profit care for seniors in long-term care. Goodness knows, long-term care needs some work too, and we know that.

We on this side of the floor have long been asking for 3.5 hours per patient per day. They don't get it. I know you hear from your long-term-care homes. You hear from their staff. You hear how overworked their staff are, how they just can't make the dollars that they get stretch, how if Mrs. Jones down the hall is screaming and having a heart attack or a stroke and you're with Mr. Smith

down here, you can't be in two places at once, and she's not going to get the care or he's not going to get the care. This is the kind of choice they make daily. What a horrible position to put human beings in.

Long-term care isn't funded well enough as it is and doesn't have enough beds, as the member from Kitchener-Waterloo pointed out, and now, instead of addressing that, we're going to allow the private sector to come in and fill the void. I truly hope that that's not what's behind this bill; that it's not about the privatization of long-term care.

But here's a nagging doubt when I say that: We all know that when you move into a retirement home, you don't get younger; you get older. You don't get stronger; you get more frail. So what happens to the person who moves into the retirement home who starts to lose their faculties and starts to lose their physical health? Well, we have hideous examples that the advocacy centre has told us about where if they are shipped off to a hospital, they're not allowed back into their home because, "Oh, no, we don't provide long-term care." They're just evicted without even the rights of a tenant under the landlord and tenant legislation. There is a hideous example of something that has actually happened; it happens all the time.

Or does the retirement home then have a next tier of care, which, quite frankly, we know many of them already do? It's much more expensive, of course, much less regulated and really is for-profit long-term care. It's a health provision; it's not a retirement home. They're already doing that. We know that.

This bill doesn't address that, and in fact it raises all sorts of concerns that exactly that kind of service will not only increase, but in a sense, in regulating the retirement part of it, we're giving them some kind of ethical licence, if you will, to just continue to expand. That's scary. That's really scary. I hope that is not going to happen, but again, we need to hear from all these advocacy groups to make sure it doesn't. It has to be in the body of the bill.

I would really advise that every member here—I hope they already do; I know that some do—makes regular visits to retirement homes and long-term-care homes in their ridings and listens to those folk. I remember delivering stacks of petitions to this government from just those workers in those homes. I don't want to have to be bringing wheelbarrows full of petitions from them because of the now two-tier health care system, the privatization by stealth, that this bill might assist.

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Oh, Cheri, you're fearmongering.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's already happening. The Minister of Transportation says I'm fearmongering. I'm sorry. I can show you instances where it's already happening, that private, for-profit retirement homes are offering long-term care. They're offering it for a fee. The question is, is it good? Is it bad? We don't know. If you pay enough, presumably it's good enough. Right? But if you don't pay enough—and the member from Welland



was very right to point this out. If we're talking about that second tier of for-profit homes that are going to be, in a sense, the Walmart of retirement homes, they're going to sell for cheap and for less to those who can't afford it and are going to do that by what? Cutting corners in food quality, in care, in facilities, in the ability to run down the hall and look after Mrs. Jones. If they get into the long-term-care business, we're looking at a major potential catastrophe.

Quite frankly, with three minutes left, I haven't even talked about the fact that we don't have sprinkler systems in this bill. That's a no-brainer. Everyone's asking for that, sprinkler systems. Thirty-six seniors have already lost their lives in this province because of the lack of sprinkler systems in retirement homes, long-term-care homes. My goodness, can't that be in here? That's not asking for a lot. That's asking for a minimum level of care, but maybe in the Walmartization of the retirement business even that's too much, because that may be the profit margin. Who knows? We need to know: That's the answer. We need to know. We need to give some flesh to the skeleton of this bill, and the flesh that we need to give to the skeleton of this bill is some teeth—teeth and flesh—that will make it into something that actually might some day protect someone. That's all we're asking for in the New Democratic Party. That's all we're asking for.

I would highly advise those at home who have seniors that they are trying to find care for, and those who are perhaps seniors themselves who are moving into homes, to really write and call your MPP. Demand some assistance; demand some protection for our most vulnerable. These are the people who raised us. These are the people we'll become. This bill doesn't do it. As written, it doesn't do it. As written, this bill is not going to save one life. It doesn't even have sprinkler systems in it. It's not going to save one life. It's business as usual with a nice, sounds-good covering.

They already have residents' councils. They already have charters of rights. They are already self-regulating, some of the better homes. We want more. We're not asking for a lot more. We're not even asking, really, for what we think we should have, which is that the ministry step in and do what the ministry is called to do; that is, to protect our seniors by regulation directly from here, with inspectors who are sent out, just like in the Ministry of Labour, to look at the sites where these people live, check on what's going on there and report back. We're not even asking for that. We're asking that those advocacy groups that work with seniors every day be listened to and that their proposals be taken seriously at committee. That's all. That's enough, because if you do just that, which hasn't been done yet, clearly, from their writing, then we might have something that we all could be proud of and we might actually have something that might save someone's life. That's what we're talking about.

I say these words in honour of the Marys and the Bobs and in honour of the work that all of those various

advocacy groups do with seniors every single hour, every single day. Let's listen to it. Let's listen to them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** It's a pleasure to speak in favour of Bill 21, the Retirement Homes Act. We all know that our seniors' population is expected to grow to nearly 4.1 million over the next 20 years. That's why, as legislators, I feel it's important that we put more of our efforts and resources into making sure that our seniors get the respect for when they retire and that the retirement homes that they do end up living in are safe and are protected.

It's for this reason that our government is proposing legislative protections for seniors living in retirement homes. We're taking the right steps to set standards, to license and inspect all retirement homes and to make sure that seniors are receiving the quality services that they expect and most definitely deserve.

How did we do this? We held consultations, where over 800 people participated, on the standards of care needed in retirement homes. The input came from the seniors themselves, their families and from the retirement home industry. We did this, as I said before, to protect seniors from any type of abuse by their caregivers, to give them the options and to have them know what the cost is for the care that they will be receiving.

This bill will, obviously, be creating a regulatory authority with the power to license homes, conduct inspections and investigations and enforcement.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The member for Parkdale-High Park never fails to hit it right on the bull's eye. I appreciate her contribution to this debate.

It's difficult when you have a majority government that's hell-bent on passing a piece of legislation and isn't prepared to listen to the legitimate concerns, the bona fide concerns, of people who have serious interest in the impact that this is going to have on our seniors. Because once it's done, it's for a long, long time. It's not going to be readdressed any time soon. Once this bill passes, should it pass in this form or in any other form, it's not going to be readdressed. It's not going to be revived for reconsideration. It's going to be a long, long time before that happens.

As Ms. DiNovo capably pointed out, we already have industry self-regulation. When you talk about a regulatory regime protecting public interest, public safety, public welfare, it's in the public interest that that regulatory regime must be enforced. You can only do that when it's the state that has that regulatory power and the enforcement power, and this bill relinquishes that to the very industry that will be committing the sins.

So New Democrats will be insisting that this bill go to committee. New Democrats will be scrutinizing this bill with vigorous rigourism at committee. And, yes, we expect that the public will demonstrate a similar interest in this bill, both seniors and their children and grandchildren, because this isn't just a seniors' issue; it's an Ontarians' issue. It's a people's issue because, if we're



not seniors now, we're going to be, should we be blessed with living that long.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I think we're beginning to lose track of something here that's very important. In some 700 retirement homes across Ontario live 40,000 seniors. When I was the parliamentary assistant to the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, I actually got to attend some of those early hearings, and I listened to people ask for exactly what this bill delivers. I think it's time to recognize now that we need to get on with it. We need to get those licences issued to homes that meet the criteria and standards as set out in this legislation and regulations. We need to create that public registry. We need to begin those regular inspections.

I'm shocked and disappointed that my colleagues over in the NDP would propose to take a good bill and layer it with all manner of extra additions that pertain to the building code that have nothing to do with what this bill is there to do, which is to provide that regulatory environment, to provide exactly the things that the people who spent their days carefully deliberating in those hearings specifically asked for. They weren't asking for revisions to the building code. What they were asking for, and what this bill does deliver, is a regulatory environment that enables the good actors to know that their business is running well, and it also enables this province to clean up the bad actors. That's important to some of those 40,000 seniors who live in those 700 retirement homes in Ontario.

As some of the members have said, there are a lot of baby boomers in here. For every one senior out there, when we baby boomers become seniors, there's going to be two. For every person age 80 and above out there, when we baby boomers become octogenarians, there will be three.

This is an important piece of legislation. I think we should get on with it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the member from Parkdale-High Park has two minutes for her response.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** In response to the member from Mississauga-Streetsville, I just want to point out that these are the groups that haven't been heard and want to be heard: Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, fire chiefs of Ontario, seniors' organizations, SEIU, ONA, CUPE, OPSEU, Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Service for Seniors and a number of others. We're not talking about

just anybody; we're talking about groups that are intimately, every day involved with seniors. They want input into this bill. They don't feel they've been heard well enough yet. That's all we're talking about.

I'm also talking about the coroner's report—and I didn't have a chance to speak to it—that was released in September 2009. In that chief coroner's report, because of the death of an elderly woman in a retirement home, it says very specifically that, "Programs in private care or retirement homes in the province of Ontario providing care to frail elderly residents awaiting placement in a licensed long-term-care home should be held to the same standards for care and services as a licensed long-term-care home." He goes on to say they should be "subject to regulations, oversight, and regular inspection by a public sector agency."

Coroners and groups that work with seniors—come on, this is not just an NDP thing. This is from the very stakeholders that want this legislation, need it and want to have input into it. All we're asking in the New Democratic Party is that they get that input, that they get that time, that they get the committee hearings and that they are able, for this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance, to make this bill the strong bill it could be. We're trying to make it better. That's what we're trying to do.

Thank you for your input. Certainly, we will be watching the progress of this bill. We're excited to see how strong it could be, how protective it could be and how well this ministry could listen to the advocates for seniors in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Ms. Wynne moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Phillips has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1743.*



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Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
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<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
		Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
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Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby—Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora—Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham—Kent—Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West—Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest—Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges—Markham	
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Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
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Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean—Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga—Brampton South / Mississauga—Brampton-Sud	
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Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
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<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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Maria Van Bommel  
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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 19 April 2010

Lundi 19 avril 2010



Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 19 April 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 19 avril 2010

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for personal thought and inner reflection.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** It's with pleasure that I rise today to introduce Tara Leithead and her parents and family who are here today. Tara is the team leader for the pages today. Iain Leithead, Tara's father, is here; Cindy Holovac Leithead, her mom; Gregor Leithead, Tara's brother; and Suzanne Weaver is here, Tara's sister, with her two children, Thea and Reagan. We invite them to enjoy the proceedings this morning.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** It's my pleasure to introduce Jim and Linda Finkbeiner, who are here watching question period today. Welcome.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'd like to introduce my daughter Natasha, sitting in the west members' gallery, visiting us from Whitehorse.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'd like to introduce, visiting us from Vermilion Bay, the parents of page Zachery Lang. His parents are Debbie and Karl Lang; also, his sister Emma, who is celebrating her 11th birthday today; and finally, Zach's uncle and aunt from Oakville, Len and Lynda Currie. Welcome.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would like to welcome the medical students who are here today at Queen's Park for the OMA's medical student day. There are five students here that attend Western medical school: Dalal Dahrouj, Caitlin Symonette, Tony Di Labio, Charles Ho and Sandeep Dhaliwal. Welcome to all of our future doctors.

**M<sup>me</sup> Andrea Horwath:** Je salue la visite à Queen's Park de JoAnne Bellehumeur et la classe de cinquième année de l'école Monseigneur-de-Laval, située dans ma circonscription de Hamilton Centre. Je leur souhaite la bienvenue.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Laura Burke from the great community of Corbeil, Ontario in my riding is here with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. I'd like to welcome her as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Oxford and page Kyle Rutherford, to welcome his mother,Carolynn Rutherford; his sister Jenna Rutherford; and his aunt

Marilynn Vandenborre, to the galleries today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the Consul General of Switzerland here in Toronto, Mrs. Bernadette Hunkeler Brown. Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature today.

### MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On Tuesday, March 30, the member for Whitby-Oshawa, Mrs. Elliott, raised a point of privilege concerning a statutory requirement in the Local Health System Integration Act, 2006, that a legislative committee undertake a review of that act within the stated period of time. Specifically, subsection 39(1) states:

"A committee of the Legislative Assembly shall,

"(a) begin a comprehensive review of this act and the regulations made under it no earlier than three years and no later than four years after this act receives royal assent; and

"(b) within one year after beginning that review, make recommendations to the assembly concerning amendments to this act and the regulations made under it."

The deadline for the commencement of the legislative committee review was March 28 of this year, four years to the day that the act received royal assent. The member for Whitby-Oshawa contended in the first instance that the failure of the government to take the necessary steps to enable a legislative committee to carry out the required review amounts to a contemptuous flouting of the oversight role of the Legislative Assembly. Secondly, the member further contended that the provision in the budget bill currently before the House, Bill 16, to repeal and replace clause 39(1)(a) of the Local Health System Integration Act, 2006, and thereby defer the statutory requirements of the review of the act, was likewise contemptuous of the Legislative Assembly, particularly because the provision would have a retroactive effect.

The government House leader, Ms. Smith, responded to the point of privilege and later wrote to me to bolster her contention that the existence of Bill 16 and its introduction to the House before March 28, 2010, was indicative of the government's proactive effort to ensure that there would not be non-compliance with a statutory provision. She further argues that even if there is an issue with the current situation, such issue would be purged by the eventual passage of the amendment, if and when that occurs, since the legal framework would ultimately con-



tain no gap during which the required review of the act remained unstated and incomplete.

The third party House leader, Mr. Kormos, contends that the government House leader's comments revealed not only foreknowledge that the provision in the statute would not be complied with, but also an effort by the government to frustrate the required review. According to the member, this aggravated rather than bolstered the government House leader's position.

In reviewing the matter, I was first of all influenced by Speakers' rulings, including some of my own, in which Speakers have consistently declined to deal with legal issues or become involved in the interpretation of the law. To the extent that this point of privilege revolves around such a legal issue, the Speaker is simply not in a position to interpret a statutory requirement as found in subsection 39(1) of the act or to consider the legal ramifications presented by the assembly's ostensible non-compliance with a statutory requirement. Moreover, while I note that commencement clauses in bills providing for the retroactive coming into force of all or part of a bill is not at all an uncommon feature of legislation, their legal orderliness is beyond the jurisdiction of the Speaker to consider.

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However, in the case at hand, it is not the legal question that is at issue. There is no dispute between parties that the statutorily required review of the act by a legislative committee has not been set in motion by the date mandated in the act. Additionally, though the government House leader defends the government partly on legal grounds, the member for Whitby-Oshawa did not base her contempt argument on such a legal interpretation.

The member contends that the government's failure to take the steps necessary to bring the House into compliance with the existing law, and its introduction of legislation to set aside the requirement in any event, amounts to a contempt of the House because these actions deprived the House of part of its role to oversee the government of the day.

The member supported her argument by referring to rulings in the Canadian House of Commons by Speaker Sauvé and Speaker Fraser, and to a 1997 ruling in this House by Speaker Stockwell.

It is worthwhile to consider what constitutes a contempt of the House. As is noted in House of Commons Procedure and Practice:

"Any conduct which offends the authority or dignity of the House, even though no breach of any specific privilege may have been committed, is referred to as a contempt of the House. Contempt may be an act or an omission. It does not have to actually obstruct or impede the House or a member; it merely has to have the tendency to produce such results....

"Contempts, as opposed to 'privileges,' cannot be enumerated or categorized. As Speaker Sauvé explained in a 1980 ruling: '... while our privileges are defined, contempt of the House has no limits. When new ways are found to interfere with our proceedings, so too will the

House, in appropriate cases, be able to find that a contempt of the House has occurred.'

"Just as it is not possible to categorize or to delineate what may fall under the definition of contempt, it is not even possible to categorize the 'severity' of contempt. Contempts may vary greatly in their gravity; matters ranging from minor breaches of decorum to grave attacks against the authority of Parliament may be considered as contempts."

The government House leader has described the steps the government took, before the arrival of the date mandated in the act, to change the statutory provision and how, once Bill 16 is passed, the new provision will retroactively have the effect of erasing what might be called the "limbo period" since March 28. How can the House be out of compliance with a legal requirement that will not exist if Bill 16 becomes law and comes into force? So goes, in effect, the argument of the government House leader.

The member for Whitby-Oshawa referred to Speaker Stockwell's January 22, 1997, ruling, where he found a *prima facie* case of contempt was established with respect to government advertisements that he found conveyed the impression "that the assembly and the Legislature had a pro forma, tangential, even inferior role in the legislative and lawmaking process, and in doing so, they appear to diminish the respect that is due to this House."

A similar level of disrespect of the institution of Parliament was found by Speaker Fraser in the House of Commons on April 19, 1993. On that occasion, the Speaker ruled concerning the failure of the government of Canada to table in the House of Commons an order in council that was required by statute to be tabled by a specific date. As this was the second occurrence of this same failure, about which the government had been previously warned, the Speaker found a *prima facie* case of contempt had been established.

Does the current situation rise to this level? Does the failure of this Legislature—or more precisely, the persons in responsible leadership of it—to put itself in compliance with the Local Health System Integration Act, 2006, by whatever means one might normally expect this to occur, constitute a contemptuous disregard of this Legislature by the government?

The provision in the Local Health System Integration Act, 2006, for a committee review was not some secretive or obscure provision, nor was it recent. The government would or should have known about the approaching deadline and could easily have taken the necessary steps to deal with this well before now. The government should have done so much earlier.

But does this amount to a contempt of the House? In comparisons with the situations ruled on by Speakers Stockwell and Fraser that I just cited, I do not find that the matter raised by the member for Whitby-Oshawa represents either a flagrant or disdainful dismissal of the role of the Legislature, intended to diminish or devalue this institution, nor is it a swift repetition of the trans-



gressions about which the government has relatively recently been warned.

The Speaker does not control the government's agenda, nor can the Speaker compel a motion or any other kind of business to be brought before the House for decision. I will say, though, that a bit more advance deference to the House, and outside of an omnibus bill, would have been a far more preferable way to have this dealt with. But it is still the case that the consent of the Legislature must be secured before the change of the act can be made. As well, notice to the Legislature of the intended change was given in advance of the deadline date by way of amending legislation. I cannot find, therefore, that a *prima facie* case of contempt has been made out.

However, I do think that this matter deserves some more serious consideration. Despite the existence of Bill 16 and its provision to repeal and replace the LHIN review process, this House is nevertheless, right at this moment, seemingly not in compliance with the statute.

This is not the only such occurrence. For instance, subsection 76(5) of the Commodity Futures Act requires a legislative committee to review the report of the Ontario Commodity Futures Act advisory committee. The report was issued in 2007, and while a standing committee was assigned an order of reference to conduct the review, this was interrupted by the dissolution of the House before the committee devoted a single meeting to the issue. The review was never renewed and, to this day, a provision of that act remains unfulfilled.

Frankly, the purpose of these types of provisions baffles me. When the House passes legislation that embeds a statutory required future review by a legislative committee, the House is in effect ordering itself to do some subsequent thing, something which it already has the full power to do any time. Such provisions seem superfluous, especially when they go unobserved by the very body that mandated them in the first place. They are a recipe precisely for the type of complaint raised by the member from Whitby—Oshawa.

Furthermore, in the face of such a self-made prior order, when the House itself fails to comply, what is to be made of such lack of diligence, discipline and rigor?

Specifically to the point raised by the member from Whitby—Oshawa, taken to its logical conclusion, is the House in contempt of itself in such a scenario? It certainly won't be this Speaker who tries to make that case, but I don't think it is wise to be casual about this kind of thing. It causes me great concern, and I therefore will be writing to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to standing order 108(g), to ask the committee to consider this issue and to provide me and the House with advice on the potential for procedural remedies that might assist in these situations in the future.

In closing, I thank the member for Whitby—Oshawa, the government House leader and the third party leader for their contributions.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'd just like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your very thoughtful and thorough consideration of these matters.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO POWER AUTHORITY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question to the Premier: In a speech to the Toronto Board of Trade in 2005, the inaugural CEO of the Ontario Power Authority said, "I consider the OPA to be a transitional entity. For those of you who are worried about big bureaucracies, that sounds good."

Premier, if this was the case, why has your so-called transitional agency swollen from 15 employees to 300 in just five short years?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm pleased to respond to the question. I can understand why the Leader of the Opposition and his party wouldn't know about the importance of planning the system, planning the new generation that's necessary to provide the power that our economy needs and to provide the power that our consumers need, in terms of their quality of life.

The role of the Ontario Power Authority is to do that planning. It's important work; it's complex work. You're dealing with multi-billions of dollars in terms of infrastructure investment. It requires a great deal of expertise, expertise that the previous government lacked because they didn't have a plan.

We continue to rely on the Ontario Power Authority to provide the excellent advice that they provide to us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the minister: Clearly, you obviously have no plan or you keep changing your plan. Fifteen staff members have bloated to some 300 in five years. Your government's promise that this would be a transitional, virtual agency has become quite the opposite.

As you know, many commentators on the energy file are noting that your agencies are "doing much less for a lot more money than they used to," or "a great source of high-wage jobs and rising salaries, but their actual productivity is declining."

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Ontario families are very concerned about this. They found out this past week that their energy bills are going up some \$350 a year on average, but now we see the number of bureaucrats at your OPA balloon significantly. Minister, are you going to get it back to its original mandate?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The Ontario Power Authority is a transition agency. The transition we're talking about, however, is the transition away from the old way of doing things under the previous government, where there



weren't plans in place to deal with the amount of generation we needed; and where there was energy generation, it relied entirely on coal. We are transitioning the energy sector in this province away from dirty coal to cleaner and greener sources of energy.

Let me give you an example. When the honourable member was in cabinet between 1995 and 2003, coal-fired generation went up 127%, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions increased by 124% over that same period. Under us, so far we've been able to reduce that by 33%. By—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Quite frankly, Minister, the only thing you seem to be planning, when it comes to the OPA, is how to transition from being lean to bloated and growing each and every year. Look at the \$100,000-salary list for the OPA. It went from six executives earning \$1.5 million in 2005 to 75 people who earn over \$11.5 million today.

As the minister knows, as part of the Ontario PC plan, 10for2010.ca, we're calling for a sunset review to assess how much value these kinds of transitional agencies are offering Ontario families. But what they're seeing is the bureaucracy growing and, in return, their hydro bills up \$350 a year.

Minister, will you support a sunset review for the OPA?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think Ontarians are looking for hope for the future in terms of energy generation sustainability to ensure that the energy we're creating is not harming our children, and potentially our grandchildren, and they're looking for reliability.

The system we inherited when we came into office did not offer either of those. We've had to make some tough choices, and we're relying on the Ontario Power Authority to give us advice and help us transition our energy sector through these tough times.

These are tough decisions that your government failed to make. You did not have the courage to make these decisions when you were in office. On behalf of Ontarians and the future of their children and grandchildren, we have the courage to make these decisions. We will provide a more sustainable energy sector and, indeed, a more reliable energy sector—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### ONTARIO POWER AUTHORITY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Quite frankly, Premier, to you and your energy minister, there is no courage in allowing a bureaucracy to bloat from 15 to 300 employees; there is no courage in allowing energy rates to skyrocket in the province of Ontario.

Premier, let me see if you will answer my next question.

We've seen that bureaucracy increase from 15 to 300 employees. We've seen the number of \$100,000-or-more-a-year employees skyrocket. We've seen Ontario

families' energy bills increase significantly. If the bureaucracy at the OPA was expanding by leaps and bounds, why do they spend \$56 million on consultant contracts on top of that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We've made it very clear to all our energy partners that they must do everything within their power to ensure that our ratepayers are getting value for money, and we will not yield in our efforts to ensure that that is indeed happening.

At the same time, we know that you oppose our efforts to try to build a more reliable energy sector. But consumers need to know that the energy will be there when they need it; our economy needs to know that that energy will be there when we need it.

We recognize that you may oppose the decisions that need to be made today to ensure that that takes place, which means you oppose the investments we need to make in modernizing our nuclear fleet; you oppose the investments we need to make in moving away from coal to cleaner, greener renewable energy; you oppose the investments and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the minister: Do you know what? You're right. We oppose the growth of this bureaucracy from 15 to 300 employees and a \$350 increase in bills for Ontario's seniors and working families that they cannot afford in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

I'll say to you, Minister, that millions of dollars were handed out in sweetheart contracts to consultants, even though the executive salaries at the OPA, a so-called transitional bureaucracy, grew by over 1,000% under Dalton McGuinty's watch, and its overall size ballooned by some 1,900%. Minister, given those staggering figures, what was left for these consultants to actually do?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Nothing is more important to us than ensuring that all of our energy partners ensure that our ratepayers are getting value for money.

That being said, they have an important job to do on behalf of ourselves and on behalf of the people of Ontario, and that's cleaning up after the mess that you left behind. Nobody can say that the old Ontario Hydro was operating at maximum efficiency. Nobody ever made that claim when you were in power, so we've had to transition the entire energy sector toward getting better results, toward building better opportunities in terms of energy generation.

The day has finally come when, in the short term, we have enough energy generation to get us through the next number of years. That wasn't the case when you were in office.

We're now planning for the long—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'll try back to the Premier. The Premier passed on the first five questions; I'll try number six.



Premier, according to public accounts, your bloated OPA spent a staggering \$56 million on consultants, even though it had a runaway payroll in high-priced bureaucrats. The problem is that we have no insight into these sweetheart consulting deals. What did ratepayers get in return, aside from bills going up some \$350 on average?

We've brought forward a plan, Premier, that would see all contracts of \$10,000 or more signed by provincial public bodies posted online, to turn every Ontario family and ratepayer into a watchdog on their provincial government to see if they are getting value for this runaway spending at the OPA. Premier, will you support our plan to increase transparency and post these contracts online?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** What the member opposite refers to as runaway spending is investment in our nuclear generation: refurbishing our nuclear units, working toward a rebuild, a new build. It's investment in renewables to ensure that we move away from coal to cleaner, greener sources of energy.

The lecture we're getting here is a little bit rich when it comes to their record in office. Let me just remind—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let me just remind the Legislature about their record in office when OPG and Hydro One were in place and the Tories gave over \$10 million to help their key friends.

Do you remember Tom Long and the \$2.3 million that he received; Deb Hutton and the \$250,000-per-year job she had at Hydro One as senior vice-president; Paul Rhodes and the million dollars he had; Mike Harris, with over \$18,000 as a consultant after he served as Premier; Leslie Noble—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My first question is to the Premier. I want to start by wishing him a happy Earth Week.

A recent report by the Pembina Institute shows that transit is key to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario, but they have words of caution. Transportation systems "are particularly vulnerable to funding cuts that could stop or seriously delay potential GHG reductions."

We know the impact that the Premier's transit letdown has on transit riders across the GTA, but can the Premier tell Ontarians and Ontario families what this cut means for Ontario's climate change targets?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question. I'll just take the opportunity to commend the folks at Pembina. They do some fabulous work for us, and I think they have issued an appropriate caution when it comes to these kinds of public policy initiatives.

But again, I'm not sure I can do more than what I've already said in terms of reminding my honourable colleague and Ontarians about the dramatic investments that we have, in fact, made in public transit: \$9.3 billion since

2003, which represents \$9.3 billion more than the previous government.

**1100**

When our revenues were affected by the recession, we decided it was important for us to make some adjustments. When you're sitting in opposition, you feel no adjustments are necessary, but when you're visited by the responsibilities of government, you know you've got to make some adjustments. We decided to stretch out our investment in public transit. It's not a cut; it's just a matter of investing over an extended period of time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Funding Transit City was a big part of the government's climate change plan. Transportation is, after all, the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. But the government has admitted it's not even close to meeting its own climate change targets, and the budget cuts will only keep more people waiting in gridlock.

Why can't the Premier tell Ontario families what this transit cut means for Ontario's greenhouse gas targets?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I remember having conversations with Mayor Miller about this in our determination to find a way to work together.

Historically, the provincial government has not fully funded these kinds of initiatives, but we decided that we were going to take on that responsibility. We thought it was the appropriate thing to do in the circumstances.

Circumstances have changed somewhat. We are affected by this recession, as you well know. We decided that we had to extend the period of time over which we were making these investments—and I'll be honest about that: There are some downsides associated with that. We just can't move as quickly as we would have liked.

What we said to Ontarians is that we will not be making cuts to their hospitals, to their nurses, to their doctors. Instead, we will extend the period of time over which we invest in their public transit.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Here's what the Premier said in June 2007, after promising to fund Transit City: "This project will remove 300 million car trips off our roads. And that's good news for the air we breathe—and the fight against climate change we're waging together."

Even before the transit cuts, the government admitted that it is almost 50% off its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets—already, before the cut.

The Premier's transit cut is bad news. It's bad news for the economy, bad news for commuters who are waiting at bus stops and bad news for the air that we breathe.

Will the Premier use Earth Week to make amends and reverse his \$4-billion cut to Transit City?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There is admittedly an important connection between public transit and greenhouse gas reductions, and we're going to move as quickly as we can to make those investments and get them done.

We are investing, as we speak, \$870 million to extend the TTC subway to York region. Work has already start-



ed on the Sheppard LRT. We put over \$700 million for new TTC hybrid buses, subway cars, track repairs and improvements, and on and on.

We're also very proud of the fact that when it comes to GHG emissions from our coal-fired generation, they are at the lowest point they've been in some 45 years. The single greatest source of GHGs in Canada comes from our coal-fired generation in Ontario, and as you know, we have a specific commitment to eliminate those entirely.

### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier as well.

The cost of electricity seems to be climbing with each passing day, and the Premier's unfair sales tax will make it a lot worse. The HST won't be helping the environment, but it will add another financial burden to people who are already feeling very much squeezed.

Does the Premier think it's fair to add a new tax to electricity when rates are already on the rise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I'm delighted for the question, because it is important for us to remember the totality of our tax reform. The leader of the third party has mentioned one part of it, but I am delighted to tell the people of Ontario and the members here about the other things that we are doing to help consumers.

The first thing we've done is we've reached a historic agreement with the federal government that sees some \$4.3 billion transferred, this year and next, from the federal government to the provincial government. For single people who make \$80,000 or less, they'll be receiving, in transitional payments, some \$300 tax-free. As well, families who have a total income of \$160,000 or less will be receiving \$1,000 tax-free to help in the transition from a world where we used to have two sales taxes to one where we just have one, like all the other modern economies—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The HST is absolutely the wrong tax and it's absolutely the wrong time. Not only is the Premier bringing in a tax that will raise the price of electricity by 8%, he's also increasing the cost of conservation by cancelling the sales tax break on energy-efficient appliances.

In Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, people will be forced to pay more, whether they consume or whether they conserve. Can the Premier explain: How does this make any sense at all?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** As I was saying, it is important to understand the entire situation regarding the HST. For example, as you're talking about the need for public transit, perhaps you have not heard what was reported by the city of London—that when they buy new buses after July 1, they will for the first time receive a 78% rebate from this government for the portion of the HST that

goes to the province. That is reducing the cost for a city to invest in its public transit. That is something you voted against.

I would say to the member of the third party that it is important to take a look at the entirety of this, and I would recommend that she join some 1.3 million other Ontarians who have gone to a source of information found at [www.ontario.ca/taxchange](http://www.ontario.ca/taxchange). That is a wonderful resource that allows you to understand the entirety—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** What the Premier and his revenue minister obviously have not heard is all of the families in Ontario who are very, very worried that the HST is going to make it more expensive to heat the house, make dinner and give the kids a bath every day. This is like kicking people who are already struggling in a very tough economy in the teeth.

If they're trying to conserve, they're going to find out that one of the government's very few energy conservation measures has been stopped. The question is a simple one: How can this Premier possibly get it so wrong?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I find it rich that the NDP comes to this House and tells us about the HST when obviously they haven't heard a single comment about the NDP government in Nova Scotia raising their HST by 2%. I find it quite interesting that it seems to be one thing in Nova Scotia for their party and something else here in Ontario.

It is important for the good people of Ontario to understand that on top of the GST rebate families receive here in the province of Ontario, we are adding the new HST rebate, which will also be paid quarterly. That, for qualifying individuals and families, is some \$260 per year, tax free, for adults and children in the family—the most generous in the province. As well, perhaps the member forgets that we lowered personal income taxes on January 1, so we have the lowest personal tax rate of any jurisdiction, of any province in this great—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### ONTARIO POWER AUTHORITY

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Premier. The Ontario Power Authority, your so-called transitional bureaucracy, grows and grows with each new tax and fee you add to people's energy bills. Are you making Ontario families pay \$350 more per year on their energy bills so you can find a place to dump failed political candidates and former political aides like Ben Chin?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The Ontario Power Authority has very important work to do, and that's transitioning this energy sector from what we inherited to where we need to go.

They're working on our conservation programs. When we look at—



*Interjections.*

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We know that the party opposite does not support the investments that go into conservation because they complain about them all the time. We need to conserve, and our conservation initiatives are helping 160,000 families reduce their energy consumption through our home energy plan.

We're investing in green energy. Just two weeks ago, we announced initiatives that will create 20,000 jobs in our green energy economy. You're opposed to those—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Maybe with all the noise, I didn't hear Ben Chin's name in that answer.

In 2004, when you created the Ontario Power Authority, you said that your energy LHIN was supposed to be independent and would take the politics out of electricity. But everyone knows Ben Chin is a big Liberal. The sunshine list reveals that Chin's salary went from \$112,000 per year to \$185,000 per year when he left your office to dream up PR schemes for the OPA. His most recent one is a promotional giveaway of air miles to the first 150,000 families who will pledge to become "laundry smart."

First you had Casino Windsor running an energy centre; now you have a power authority running contests. Did it even occur to you that Ontario families would rather see a break on their energy bills than subsidize air miles?

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**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We know that the Conservatives are opposed to conservation, and will continue to be, but we are not. We will continue to work with the Ontario—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. I, like the member from Renfrew, want to hear the answer.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We will continue to work with the Ontario Power Authority and we will continue to drive forward the need to develop a culture of conservation in this province.

The Ontario Power Authority is working very hard at conservation initiatives on behalf of Ontarians. I know you don't recognize this, but we do. For every megawatt that's saved, that doesn't have to be produced or generated, it saves dollars in terms of future generation, which is a lot less effective and efficient.

I've got a list here of Conservatives that have been involved in the energy sector for a very long time. Let me just quickly read them off: Tom Long, Deb Hutton, Paul Rhodes, Mike Harris, Leslie Noble, Michael Gourley, Jaime Watt; you know all of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

When the CEO of a LHIN decides to quit two and a half years into a three-year contract, that CEO is compensated by being paid his or her full \$250,000 yearly salary despite working only six months of the last year.

Minister, whether it is LHINs or hospitals, CEOs are signing lucrative contracts that allow for very generous compensation packages when these CEOs quit, retire or are fired or let go. Why does the Minister of Health allow for this culture of entitlement to flourish among health care top executives?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you for the question. What I really need to say is that the value of the LHINs is extraordinary in our health care system. I know of no one who actually thinks the system we had before was better when it comes to driving integration in our health care system. What we had before were very siloed parts of our health care system. The hospitals were siloed, the CCACs were siloed, long-term care was siloed. There was nobody who was driving those important but distinct parts of our health care system together.

It's only through the LHINs that we're starting to see some really good news on the ground. We're starting to see our aging-at-home strategy making a difference when it comes to moving people who are in hospital but don't—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question was about compensation packages.

Just to let you know, the average salary increase of hospital executives was 7% in 2009. I can assure you that no other groups of workers negotiated a 7% increase in 2009. We now have, in health care, a \$700,000 club on the taxpayers' dime. And, as I mentioned, we see CEOs earning a full year's salary for six months' worth of work. The culture of entitlement amongst health care executives and other agencies of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care must end. It is wrong.

My question: When will the minister come out and say it is wrong, and signal to the health care system that these exorbitant salaries and benefits, those compensation packages, are not acceptable?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would be less than honest if I didn't say that I, too, was concerned about the high level of compensation of some of our executives in our hospitals. That is why CEO salaries will be frozen for the next two years under the budget bill. It is an issue, and as I do my work to make sure that we in Ontario get the very best value for the money we spend on health care, looking at compensation is one of those things that I think we need to have a look at.

Those salaries will be frozen for two years, and we are looking at other options when it comes to making sure



we get the very best value for the money we spend on health care.

### PHARMACISTS

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know that it's often a struggle for young people, especially those living independently, to pay for all their monthly expenses. Many young people in Guelph tell me that they are paying out of pocket for their prescriptions, either because they are no longer covered by their parents' drug plan or because they've got a job that doesn't actually have health insurance, which is the typical situation for young people.

There are many prescription items that young people in these situations have to pay for themselves, including, for example, oral contraceptives—birth control pills—and medication for depression. I understand that the government's plan to provide fair generic drug prices for Ontarians will reduce the cost of generic drugs. Could the minister please provide an example of how—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Guelph for her question. We've heard lots about what these reforms are going to mean for the owners of pharmacies. I'd like to talk about what these reforms are going to mean for people.

Someone who is on the birth control pill Aviane 21 or Portia 21 currently pays about \$123. Once the price reductions are in place, their cost will be \$41. That's a saving of \$82. The drug citalopram for depression: Someone on this drug would currently pay \$337. Under the new plan, they would pay \$114. That's a saving on the drug cost of \$223. That's significant. The drug paroxetine for depression: They currently pay \$385. Once these savings are in place, they will pay—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, Minister. Those are amazing savings, and I look forward to passing along the details to my constituents, because they do show what Ontarians can expect to save under this plan.

Generic drugs are used by lots of Ontarians to treat a variety of conditions, and when people don't have access to a drug plan, the costs can add up very quickly for people without drug coverage and with limited incomes. In some cases, it means that parents are not able to afford other things for their family; for example, supporting their children in after-school activities.

Can the minister please provide some more examples of how the government's plan will reduce prices for Ontario families?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** These changes are the right thing to do. They will result in real savings for real people.

Let me give you some more examples. The drug pantoprazole is for acid reflux or ulcers. Someone on that drug now would pay \$528 over the course of the year. Under the reforms, they would pay \$179. That's a savings of \$349. The drug omeprazole, also for ulcers and re-

flux: They currently pay \$423. Under the new plan, they will pay \$200, for a savings of \$223. Ramipril for hypertension: They currently pay \$256; they will pay \$87.

These are real savings for real people. I look forward to hearing from the Conservative Party why they have taken—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is for the Premier. As many in the Liberal caucus know, we're just 73 days away from your greedy HST taking \$3 billion out of the wallets of Ontario families. The Liberal backbenchers over there hope the cheques you're mailing out will make Ontario seniors and families forget that you are raising taxes yet again. But Gilles Lamese in Cornwall sees the tactic for what it is. He says, "This attempt to bribe us with \$1,000 per family"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Notwithstanding the fact that you are quoting, that is language that is not parliamentary.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I withdraw. "This attempt ... with \$1,000 per family or \$300 per individual is not only childish, but insulting."

The member for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry won't stand up for Gilles Lamese, so I will. Will you spare Ontario families and seniors the insults, and scrap your greedy HST tax grab?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank the member for being so forthright by saying that he believes that Prime Minister Harper, Minister Flaherty and Senator Runciman are wrong on this.

When our economy is faced with the challenge of trying to create new private sector jobs that will create the wealth that pays the taxes for the services that the good people of Cornwall expect from their government, we decided to take a historic step by working with them.

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I just had an opportunity to be in Cornwall with my colleague from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, and we had a remarkable trip where we had a great opportunity to answer people's questions. What they were telling me is that they were surprised by how much misinformation is out there and how very happy they were to find out the reality that seniors, for example, will have the largest tax cuts in the history of this province, effective on July—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm a little tired of the minister's rhetoric. Senator Runciman is a straight-shooter and a man of honour.

When the \$350 in energy taxes, fees and regulatory charges Dalton McGuinty has—

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. The personal attacks at one another can take place outside the chamber: They're not appreciated in here.

Please continue.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** When the \$350 in energy taxes, fees and regulatory charges Dalton McGuinty has tacked on to electricity bills is added to your health tax, Ontario families won't see a nickel of your so-called "rebate." In addition to the health and energy taxes, in 73 days, people will be paying 13% more for gas at the pump, home heating and utility costs, haircuts, gym memberships, and the list goes on and on.

Betty Cook of Windsor makes a more blunt statement than Gilles Lamese in her assessment of the HST when she says, "I think it stinks." Ministers Duncan and Pupa-tello won't stand up for Betty Cook so I will.

What makes you think \$1,000—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Well, I'm having a little trouble over here with the members opposite. I've heard from them that they are opposed to this, but I have not heard their leader say that they would repeal it. I have not heard their leader say that they would change anything that we're doing. I think that they agree with their former colleague Senator Runciman, who said, before we introduced this, "I think, in theory, our party is supportive of harmonization. In principle, we think it's something that should occur." Of course, then he followed his leader in opposition to it, but of course, he won't repeal it. Now he's in the Senate, where his job for the Prime Minister is to ensure that legislation gets through that Senate.

So I want to thank Senator Runciman and all of the good people who are working together; they understand that we need 600,000 more people in this province working. We need \$47 billion—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier. Ontario workers lost their jobs because of reckless, greedy Wall Street bankers. Ontario taxpayers should not give them more money so they can take away more of our assets.

From the subprime mortgage debacle that tanked the world economy to monkeying around with Greece's debt, from apologizing before Congress for disastrous dealings to facing fraud charges, Goldman Sachs does not share Ontarians' values and doesn't deserve our money.

Will the Premier sack this reckless, unethical Wall Street bank today?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I gather my colleague is making reference to some contractual arrangement that our government may have entered into with Goldman Sachs. It is our practice to honour any agreements that we have entered into.

I think as well, from what I read—and I know my honourable colleague would have read the same kinds of things—that there are some pretty serious allegations that have been made against Goldman Sachs south of the border. I think we owe it to, if nothing else, our respect for the process, for the process to unfold and for a determination and a finding to be made, if any, at some point in time.

But of course, I think the responsible thing for us to do is to honour any agreements which we might have entered into.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I'm sure that Goldman Sachs is happy that there's a defender somewhere in the world for them.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has launched fraud charges against Goldman Sachs. The European Union is investigating them. Britain's Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, is calling for authorities there to investigate and accusing the investment bank of "moral bankruptcy." The German government is demanding information about their dealings.

If you're unprepared to fire them, will you immediately cancel all work with Goldman Sachs until the serious allegations are addressed?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My colleague makes reference to actions taken by national governments. We are a subnational government.

We have contracted with Goldman Sachs to perform particular kinds of work. I think it's important to come back to what we're really talking about here. We're talking about a potential asset transaction of some kind. We're looking at some of the monies that have presently been invested in some of our long-term businesses, like OLG, LCBO and others, and whether the best way for us to use that taxpayer money is to continue to have it invested in those systems or to remove that and invest it in some kind of initiative to help us build a stronger economy. It's a thoughtful review process, and we look forward to continuing to engage in it.

## WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** My question is for the Minister of Labour. This province needs new health and safety initiatives for Ontario's workplaces, and I'd like to ask about a recent inspection blitz focusing on fall hazards in the construction sector.

Falls can have tragic consequences in the construction sector. Reducing their frequency makes Ontario workplaces safer.

This inspection blitz ended last Friday. It was a targeted enforcement campaign where inspectors visited construction projects and focused on fall-related training, supervision and equipment. It was the longest health and safety blitz ever conducted by the ministry.

Minister, Ontario needs to know more about this safety blitz. What else can you tell us?



**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I'd like to thank the member from Mississauga—Streetsville for his advocacy and for his support of the health and safety of our province's workers.

As the member stated, our 90-day blitz of fall hazards concluded last Friday. During these past three months, we visited more than 2,500 construction projects involving thousands of workers. We inspected these workplaces for compliance with health and safety requirements. We issued a range of orders, everything from warnings to stop-work orders.

Over the next few weeks, we will be posting our findings on our website. We will also be providing our blitz results through our health and safety partners, as well as our expert advisory panel, chaired by Tony Dean, and the section 21 construction committee. I'll be asking for recommendations on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Minister, the health and safety of Ontario workers is essential, both for construction workers and for the firms that employ them. During the past six years, Ontario has improved workplace health and safety in this province. Workplace lost-time injuries have decreased by more than 20%.

There's more, however, to this than statistics, and Ontarians need more information. Would the minister please share with this House how the results and analysis of this particular safety blitz will help protect our workers in the future?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** Thank you to the member again. It's my ministry's mandate and my personal pledge that we will do all we can to make Ontario's workplaces safer and healthier. That's why my ministry inspectors are out on work sites every single day: to ensure that our workers' rights and their safety are protected.

I'm confident that the results of this extensive blitz will give us a good picture of occupational health and safety in today's construction sector. I am very much looking forward to hearing the advice and recommendations from our health and safety partners as a result of the data that have been compiled during this fall-hazards blitz. These results and recommendations will help us point the way to improve health and safety. My ministry and our partners will join together to fight the common dangers of fall hazards.

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#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I have a question for the Minister of Education. Do you support the Pascal report on full-day kindergarten in its entirety?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I think our government has a very strong commitment to early learners in Ontario, and that is why the Premier announced that we will establish our full-day learning program for four- and five-year-olds.

We did ask Dr. Pascal to consider our earliest learners and provide us with some ideas on how we might move forward to support families and our youngest learners to enable them to be successful when they arrive at school.

We've received the report, and I think it's fair to say that the reaction to our initiative on the part of this government has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly by parents but even by the business community, which recognizes that what we are doing here, the first of its kind in North America, is an investment in our youth and an investment in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The Pascal report, *With Our Best Future in Mind*, states on page 14, "Children's participation would be by parental choice, with parents having the option of a half, full (school hours), or fee-based extended day of programming."

Minister, I have an email that I'm going to ask the pages to take over to you.

Can you explain to me why, on January 7, a memo from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board suggests that you are taking away parental choice by forcing parents whose preference is half days to, instead, transfer their child out of their current school that is only offering full days? What kind of choice is that for parents?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** The choice is still there. Parents continue to have the right to choose if they want to have their children enrolled in a kindergarten program in the province of Ontario. In fact, the law in Ontario is that, until a child is six years of age, they are not required to be enrolled in any school. With the announcement of our early learning program, the same rules apply. If parents wish to have their children enrolled in the program, that would be their choice.

We are not making any law that says, "If your child is four years old or five years old, they must be enrolled." It continues to be the option for the family. We are committed to ensuring that in the province of Ontario we have the very best early learning program. We know that the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** A question to the Minister of Health. People in Kenora want to know: Does the Minister of Health believe it is right that a 90-year-old woman who is a patient at Lake of the Woods District Hospital is told that the only long-term-care bed for her is in a long-term-care home in a community that is 220 kilometres away? Does the Minister of Health think it is right to tell families to send their loved ones so far away just to get the health care they need?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, I do not think it is right for people who are in hospitals in Kenora to be told they must go hours away for long-term care. This is an issue that I have taken some interest in, and I think the member might want to know that there are now 13



patients in need of long-term-care beds at the Lake of the Woods hospital. They are a top priority for placement in long-term care in the community and where they choose across the LHIN. The LHIN is working actively with the ministry on a plan to address the ALC pressures in Kenora. This is a range of solutions, including interim beds and home care.

There are two long-term-care homes in Kenora. Birchwood Terrace has five spaces available. They are temporarily not admitting people because of an infection outbreak. They are working with public health, and we are hoping that situation—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** As the minister knows, it's not just this 90-year-old patient; it is several patients. They are all being told that if they want a long-term-care bed, "then go 220 kilometres down the highway, away from your family, away from your loved ones and anyone who even knows you." What is worse, there are 12 long-term-care beds at the home for the aged in Kenora, but they are shut down due to lack of funding.

Many people have written to the minister, and I've written to the minister, asking that the 12 long-term-care beds that are shut down due to lack of funding receive the operating funding they need. The question is: Will the minister provide the funding, or does the McGuinty government think it's appropriate to send people—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me confirm that no patients have moved from the Kenora area to Rainycrest, Fort Frances. This is not hospital policy. The CEO of the hospital has sent a letter to the families, to the patients, and clarified with the doctors and the nurses that they are not moving.

The member opposite is apparently unaware that Pinecrest, the home he is speaking about, does have beds available but they are what we call D beds. They are not up to the standards that we insist be met for interim beds.

We are working with the LHIN, with Pinecrest, to determine how we can address this issue as quickly as possible. We are committed to doing this, and we are working very hard to get—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation.

Minister, transit is a vital part of the greater Toronto and Hamilton region. Whether you live in the downtown core, in communities like my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River, or further away in places like Barrie, Oshawa or Georgetown, transit provides a convenient and environmentally friendly alternative to driving.

Minister, the greater Toronto and Hamilton area is projected to grow by more than 3.7 million people by

2031. Ensuring that we have a strong, comprehensive transit system in place is going to be the key to supporting our communities and the economy.

Would the minister tell the House what the government is doing to build better transit for tomorrow?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough—Rouge River for his question and for his work for the city of Toronto and for his constituents.

Our government knows how important it is to build a strong and coherent transit system. That's why we delivered on our commitment to establish Metrolinx. The job of Metrolinx is to improve the coordination and integration of all the transportation in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

We continue to make investments. Just last week, I was at the Lansdowne bridge in the west end of Toronto, with Metrolinx staff and the federal Minister of Finance, where we made a joint federal-provincial announcement for \$16.6 million toward six GO projects in the GTA. This money will go toward the Bloor Street bridge, the Brock Street bridge, the Dufferin Street bridge, the Dupont Street bridge, and Lansdowne and Queen, all along the Georgetown South corridor, to accommodate a fourth track, which is necessary to build capacity on that track.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Minister, thank you for your response. I'm pleased to hear that the government and Metrolinx are moving forward to expand capacity of the GO Transit network. This is good news for all Ontarians. Families and seniors in Scarborough—Rouge River rely on the TTC as well as GO Transit to get downtown and to other parts of the city.

Minister, there has been a lot of talk about Transit City over the past few weeks and misinformation about the government's commitment to these projects.

Would the minister clarify for us the status of the Transit City projects and tell us more about the government's investment in transit in Toronto?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There has been a lot of talk about this issue over the last few weeks.

Let me be clear: We are not cancelling these projects. Rather, we're stretching the investment over a longer period of time, and we have said that repeatedly. I've asked Metrolinx to come up with a plan to phase these projects in. They are in the process of doing that. It will be a fiscally responsible plan. We were forced to do that because of our economic circumstances.

We have made landmark investments in the GTA in transit. Since we began the gas tax program in 2004, the city of Toronto has received almost \$688 million in gas tax. We have provided the city of Toronto \$416 million for the replacement of streetcars, \$870 million for the Spadina subway extension. There have been more investments in transit than for a generation—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.



## TAXATION

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Minister, the agricultural fair is an important tradition in communities across Ontario. As you know, admissions to events held and sponsored by agricultural societies are exempt from charging the provincial sales tax.

Can you assure agricultural societies that your government will continue to exempt agricultural fairs from having to pay the harmonized sales tax to suppliers, as well as charging HST on the admission to fairs?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** I'm going to pass this to the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank the member for the question. It is, in the province of Ontario, a situation today where the GST is or is perhaps not charged when it comes to agricultural fairs. It really depends on the amount of ticket revenue they have.

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So what are the federal guidelines right now? As a not-for-profit, if the agricultural fair has less than \$50,000 worth of sales, they do not charge the GST and they do not charge the PST. I can assure the member that after July 1, they will not charge the HST because they will not fall under the current federal threshold.

In a situation where an agricultural fair does, indeed, charge the GST, they will be required to charge the HST, but as a result, they will also be entitled to a rebate—the most generous series of rebates in the country. So I'd be more than happy to help the member—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Minister, that answer just reinforces why I've had so many agricultural societies in my community ask me to get clarification on whether or not they are exempt. They have written a number of letters; they've asked the Minister of Agriculture to respond to this issue, and she has ignored it. I suppose that by referring it, she is ignoring it again.

I simply am looking for clarification on whether agricultural societies across Ontario will continue to be exempt from charging the HST on their admission. Without all of the other side stuff, will you answer that question? Admissions: Are they going to be HST-exempt?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I say to the member, when you ask a question about sales tax, the answer comes from the Minister of Revenue, not the Minister of Agriculture. So it is important that you ask the minister responsible.

What I can tell you is that the federal government today, in regard to the GST, has a series of rules that apply to agricultural fairs. It has to do with, what are their sales? I'd be more than happy to sit down with the member and review each and every agricultural fair in her riding to ensure that her agricultural fairs, which form the backbone of the heritage of our agricultural communities, have the information that they need.

As I've said many times, anyone can go to our website at [www.ontario.ca/taxchange](http://www.ontario.ca/taxchange); some 1.3 million Ontarians have already gone to that website. I know that if she went to that website, she would find—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. On Friday, Labatt closed its Lakeport plant in Hamilton. The move cost 143 families good jobs that they relied on to pay the bills. A few companies are actually interested in taking over the plant, which would keep very much-needed jobs in Hamilton. It's not going to work, however, if Labatt is following through with their plans to take the equipment out of the plant.

My question is this: Has the Premier talked to his friend and Labatt executive, Charlie Angelakos, about the company's plans?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I do appreciate the opportunity to speak about Hamilton, firstly, because Hamilton is an important hub for Ontario business, and we are determined to do everything we can to help Hamilton thrive. Number two, let me speak specifically to this issue: We worry greatly when we hear that there are workers who suddenly find that they won't have a job. We worry about those people.

We have been in constant contact with the member from Hamilton Mountain, who has raised this issue continually with us, and I have to tell you that we have made contact with Labatt. We have talked to them. The Ontario government cannot tell a business what they're going to do, but what we can do is prescribe the kind of business environment to want business to happen in that region, and Hamilton is the prime example where significant infrastructure investment by this government will make for a terrific future for the city of Hamilton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** There is a chance to protect 143 jobs in a very hard-hit community. Labatt needs to be convinced that keeping the equipment at the plant is actually the right thing to do. What better candidate for that job than the Premier, whose dear friend and former aid Charlie Angelakos is an executive with Labatt? Will the Premier get on the phone with Mr. Angelakos, ask him to keep the equipment at the plant and work out a deal to protect these jobs? That's what we need. We don't need worry; we need to you pick up the phone and call a friend.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I think what's very telling is that the Hamilton region, as well as other parts of Ontario, do extraordinarily well in those microbreweries, in craft breweries. Ontario has a terrific reputation, not just with the big international breweries, but also with the ones that were successful in the Lakeport plant.



What we're determined to do is continue to sell Hamilton to the world, to continue to talk about the skilled trade that's available in that region—to know that we have workers who are prepared to work as well as any best workforce in the world. We're determined to do that.

We are happy to play a role, if we can, to incite others to come and look to Hamilton to see what they can do in terms of investment. We will continue to do that and we are determined to do the best that we can for the city of Hamilton.

#### ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Ontario's culture industry plays a central role in improving the quality of life in Ontario, but it also plays a critical role in Ontario's economic life.

Artists are important to the economy of Ontario. They cultivate creativity and they drive economic activity. There were 80,000 net new jobs created between 1999 and 2007, but things are tough right now; things are very tough in the cultural industry. My question to the minister: What are you doing and what's our government doing to strengthen support for artists and this vital cultural industry?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to welcome the opportunity to talk about culture in Ontario. Ontario artists are indeed the driving force of the culture industry.

Our government understands that investments in the Ontario cultural industry are now more important than ever. Since 2003, our government has invested more than \$2 billion in our culture agencies. That includes over \$800 million in the Ontario Trillium Foundation, over \$300 million in the Ontario Arts Council and over \$80 million in the Ontario Media Development Corp.

These investments support Ontario artists, strengthen Ontario's cultural industry and improve the socio-economic state of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** What the cultural industry and artists are looking for are some very specific assurances from our government. Specifically, Minister, they want to know that we remain committed to supporting the arts and culture in the future. It's no time to slow down in this investment, given this economic climate.

Minister, in this year's budget, what specifically are we doing to support artists and the cultural activity of this province and the economy that it supports?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member again for the question. I want to assure artists across this province that our government remains committed to supporting the cultural industry. This year, the Trillium Foundation will receive \$120 million to continue support for the non-profit arts and culture organizations.

Since 2003, we have increased the Ontario Trillium Foundation's budget by 20%. We also increased the Ontario Arts Council's annual budget by 140%, bringing it

to \$60 million per year. As I said before, we remain committed to continuing these investments and to continuing support for Ontario artists and everyone in Ontario's cultural industry.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1148 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I know they will be acknowledged shortly, but I wanted to acknowledge, in the east gallery, Gary Lipinski, the president of the Métis Nation of Ontario; Sharon McBride, vice-chair of the Métis Nation of Ontario; Tim Pile, secretary treasurer of the Métis Nation of Ontario; Joanne Meyer, director of intergovernmental relations; Bill Wilkinson, director of economic development; and Melanie Paradis, director of lands, resources and consultation. On behalf of all members, welcome.

#### WEARING OF SASH

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd be asking for unanimous consent, for those members who wish, to wear the Métis sash.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Thank you.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### EARTH DAY

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** As the minister and this government fill our calendar with the new designated green days—Climate Change Awareness Day, Waste Diversion Day—and celebrate the latest week-long designation of Earth Week, I'm old school; I prefer to go back to the roots, if you will. Call me a purist, but I prefer to stand by the message that first launched a coordinated effort aimed at across-the-board environmental awareness. I'm speaking, of course, of Earth Day, which we will all recognize this Thursday, 40 years after the first such event helped spawn the environmental movement.

With the multitude of days, weeks, months and hours—I'm still waiting for someone to declare Earth Fortnight—we lose the importance of what we're supposed to be doing in the first place. Maybe that's why we see government more interested in setting targets than meeting them. This government told us years ago that it was targeting 60% diversion by 2008. We're now at 2010 and nowhere near that number.

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario has told us that Ontario will again come nowhere near its carbon emission targets. Never mind the targets, this government



couldn't hit the broad side of a barn. I guess that's why we see this government going mute on the issue of climate change since the passage of its much-ballyhooed cap-and-trade legislation.

So I invite Ontarians to turn back the clock, go back to our green roots and recognize Earth Day this Thursday, April 22.

### TULIP FESTIVAL

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about the world-famous Canadian Tulip Festival, happening soon, from May 7 to 24, in the beautiful city of Ottawa.

The festival originated with a gift of 100,000 tulips to the city of Ottawa from the Dutch royal family as thanks for Canada's legacy in freeing the people of the Netherlands from oppression in the Second World War and for providing a safe harbour for the Dutch royal family in our city during that tumultuous period.

With that special history comes an important anniversary this year. The 2010 festival will be officially celebrating the 65th anniversary of our Canadian troops' liberating the Netherlands. In addition, this year's festival will also be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Navy.

This event has become a staple in Ottawa, because not only are there truly impressive tulip displays, but events for people of all ages and cuisine, music and crafts from more than 30 countries.

I would like to compliment the hard-working team that makes this event possible every year, including Chair David Luxton, President Teri Kirk and the rest of the team and volunteers who make it happen.

I encourage residents of Ottawa to get out and enjoy this very special event. Ontarians, Canadians and our guests from around the world ought to come and see one of the best festivals in Canada, right in our nation's capital. [Tulipfestival.ca](http://Tulipfestival.ca) has all the information and events to make the most of this year's festival.

### VOLUNTEERS

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Volunteering is a fundamental act of citizenship in our province. As more and more people become involved in volunteering, our communities continue to grow and prosper.

By caring and contributing to change, volunteers are changing lives while increasing their own life skills. Every day, thousands of volunteers donate their time and energy without any expectation of monetary reward. Thousands of Ontarians benefit from the selfless acts of volunteers. This week, during National Volunteer Week, we celebrate the hard work put forth by Ontario's volunteers.

Today, I will be reintroducing my private member's bill, the Criminal Record Checks for Volunteers Act.

Many volunteer organizations, particularly those dealing with children and individuals with a disability,

require their volunteers to submit a criminal record check. In many cases, volunteers have to pay out of their own pocket for a criminal record check, or the organization has to fundraise to underwrite the cost of criminal record checks for their volunteers.

The goal of my bill is to allow volunteers to pay for their criminal record check once per year, yet access this record to distribute to multiple agencies at no additional cost to the volunteer or the agency. This cost-saving initiative would encourage more volunteers to donate their time to multiple causes and reduce unnecessary duplication for our police services.

Volunteering is important for our communities. Without the important work that volunteers do, our schools, hospitals and many organizations would suffer.

### STUDENT LEADERS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I want to rise today to acknowledge some phenomenal schools in my riding: Fern and Parkdale, which last year were the first schools to host the girls' government program anywhere in Ontario; and this year, Annette and Runnymede. The girls this year were immortalized in Jim Coyle's article about them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the clerks and to everyone else, including Minister Bradley, for taking part in this wonderful initiative to get young women involved in politics and parliamentary procedure.

I also want to thank City View Alternative Senior School, another great, forward-looking school whose students Colin, Liddell and Corinne are shadowing me all week, both in the constituency office and here, to learn about what we do and to open these doors so that students can really learn about the political process.

I'm hoping that one day down the line, all of this actually encourages these young people to run for office, particularly the young women, and that one day we see them not only come back here as members of provincial Parliament but also in Ottawa, where I take girls' government as well, so that one day we see both a female Prime Minister of Canada and a female Premier of Ontario. That would be good news.

Thank you to all the schools, and thank you to the students here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm sure you'll see a female Speaker at some point here in the province of Ontario too.

### CAREFIRST

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I rise today to speak of an organization known as Carefirst, which serves my riding of Richmond Hill.

Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association is a non-profit charitable community services agency serving the greater Toronto area and York region. This organization was established in 1976, and its services have grown from the delivery of a Chinese meals-on-



wheels service to a full range of community support services.

Carefirst Family Health Team, which is part of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care initiative to establish greater access to interdisciplinary physicians as well as other health care specialists for communities across the province, opened its doors to patients in July 2007.

With a team of family physicians, registered nurses and nurse practitioners as well as supporting administrative staff, Richmond Hill family health centre provides primary health care to the surrounding communities, including Canadians of Chinese and South Asian heritage.

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I had the great pleasure of accompanying Premier McGuinty on a visit to the Carefirst Richmond Hill location this past Friday. I was very pleased to see the amazing and tremendous work that is being done at the Carefirst Family Health Team.

Please join me in thanking the dedicated staff at Carefirst for their outstanding work in serving the people of Richmond Hill.

#### TRANSPORTATION PROJECT

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Three and a half weeks ago, the government tabled its budget for the coming fiscal year. Within the Ministry of Finance's budget papers document, we see that this year the Ministry of Transportation plans to spend over \$3 billion on highway expansion, highway and bridge rehabilitation and other transportation infrastructure. This budget allocation is up dramatically from last year's funding levels.

I'm the first to acknowledge that the Ministry of Transportation has many worthy projects on its priority list, I'm sure, but surely this increased funding, some \$606 million more than last year, means that people in Puslinch township can anticipate that the Morriston bypass will soon be built. We've talked about this project for decades—literally. Working with Puslinch township council and staff, we have repeatedly stressed the need for this project in every possible way.

On behalf of the residents of the township whom I'm honoured to serve, I have to say that we are sick and tired of this government's continued excuses for delays. The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation is in a privileged position to help move this project forward. We need her active advocacy for this project, which will benefit the city of Guelph every bit as much as it benefits the county of Wellington.

On February 22, the Minister of Transportation was invited to come to Puslinch township to speak to the council and its residents and see for herself why this project should be considered amongst the ministry's highest priorities. I call upon the minister to accept this invitation, come to the township of Puslinch, meet with the council and residents and help us to move this project forward.

#### COOTES TO ESCARPMENT PARK SYSTEM

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** I rise today to discuss an important conservation strategy under way in my region, the Cootes to escarpment park system. Eight different agencies have come together to protect 3,700 acres of natural landscape containing nearly a quarter of all of Canada's different plant species growing within its boundaries, including several rare species.

In the face of growing communities and urbanization, this is the last area of the escarpment that is not divided from Lake Ontario wetlands by a 400-series highway. It is a region bigger than Hyde Park in London or Central Park in New York.

The eight organizations that own various parts of the land are now working under a new management system to preserve these lands and implement a strategy to educate the public on the biodiversity of the area and protect this irreplaceable region.

The plans for the Cootes to escarpment park system were developed in consultation with public stakeholders, local government and non-governmental organizations. I'd like to commend all those involved in protecting this beautiful area and certainly offer my support.

I would add, on a personal note, that it's my hope that this will be the first step, perhaps a springboard, to seeing this area eventually declared Ontario's first urban biosphere provincial park.

#### NATIONAL SOIL CONSERVATION WEEK

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I rise today to recognize and bring attention to National Soil Conservation Week, which runs from April 18 through April 24. This marks the 25th year that Canada is recognizing this event to highlight the importance of conserving vital topsoil.

The McGuinty government recognizes the significant contribution that farmers make to Ontario's environmental stewardship. We understand the pride that Ontario's farmers take in being excellent stewards of the land. Soil is one of their most precious resources.

Good soil management contributes to better-quality and higher crop yields, and every farmer in Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and Ontario understands the importance of conserving this vital resource for the next generation of food producers.

Soil conservation is not only necessary for our agricultural producers but also for society in general. It helps maintain resources, such as water, air and wildlife habitat. Today's soil conservation practices contribute significantly to reducing and removing overall greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. This resource is one of the most fragile on the planet. To paraphrase Mark Twain, they're not making any more of it.

I urge members to take time during National Soil Conservation Week to think about our soil resources and to give credit to the producers and their organizations,

such as the Soil Conservation Council of Canada, that are so dedicated to its conservation.

## POLISH COMMUNITY

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** On Thursday, April 15, 2010, I joined with thousands of Polish Canadians to remember the lives of the President of the Republic of Poland, the late Mr. Lech Kaczynski; the First Lady, Mrs. Maria Kaczynski; and 94 other Polish military, political, social and religious leaders who had lost their lives in a fatal plane crash on Saturday, April 10, 2010. I was touched by the strong show of support for Poland at the St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic church, which is in my riding of Mississauga-Brampton South.

With more than a thousand years of history, the Polish people have demonstrated that they are a resilient people. They have endured partition, wars, occupation and Communism, and have still come out a strong, democratic nation.

The story of Poland is a testament to the principle of freedom. With the same strength that the Polish people have demonstrated to overcome the Nazi occupation and the Katyn massacre, I know they will overcome this sorrowful time as well.

But they are not alone. Ontario mourns with Poland, and on behalf of the residents of my riding, Mississauga-Brampton South, I would like to express my most sincere condolences to Polish Canadians in my riding and across Canada.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act /  
Projet de loi 236, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes de  
retraite.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS FOR VOLUNTEERS ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LES VÉRIFICATIONS DU CASIER JUDICIAIRE DES BÉNÉVOLES

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act respecting criminal record checks for volunteers /  
Projet de loi 38, Loi concernant les  
vérifications du casier judiciaire des bénévoles.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** The goal of my private member's bill would be to create a system whereby volunteers pay for their criminal record check once per year, yet can access this record to distribute to multiple volunteer organizations at no additional cost to the volunteer or the agency.

## YEAR OF THE MÉTIS

### ANNÉE DES MÉTIS

**Hon. Ms. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice respecting the commemoration of the Year of the Métis and that up to 15 minutes be allotted to each recognized party to debate the motion, following which the Speaker shall immediately put all questions necessary to dispose of the motion.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** We move that this House commemorates 2010 as the Year of the Métis; and that the Ontario Legislature recognizes and honours the distinct culture, identity and heritage of the Métis people in the province as well as the historic and ongoing contributions of the Métis in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** At the outset, I'd like to say that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Ottawa West-Nepean, Mr. Chiarelli, and the MPP from Sault Sainte Marie, David Oraziatti.

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It is my pleasure to rise in the House today on this very important and unique occasion where we recognize the unique history, culture and people who are the Métis. I introduced earlier Gary Lipinski, president of the Métis Nation of the province of Ontario, and his executive, Sharon McBride, as well as Tim Pile, Joanne Meyer, Bill Wilkinson and Melanie Paradis.

I would like to say at the outset:

*Remarks in Michif.*



**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** And to all of you who don't speak Michif, that's Michif for "Hello and welcome."

The Métis are an important part of the richness of Ontario's cultural tapestry. They are one of our founding peoples and are recognized specifically in the Constitution Act of 1982.

Les Métis constituent une partie importante de la richesse de la mosaïque culturelle de l'Ontario. Ils comptent parmi nos peuples fondateurs et sont reconnus comme tels par la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982.

They built a new culture, taking the traditions of First Nations and European fur traders and creating something very unique. This culture remains vibrant today, a symbol of the strength found not only in valuing differences but in celebrating them, and we can learn from these lessons.

It is appropriate for us to honour the Métis this year, for it was 125 years ago that the Northwest Rebellion ended at Batoche in Saskatchewan. Batoche has since become a symbol of the resilience of the Métis, of the people who were determined to preserve their culture, their heritage, their uniqueness.

The Métis, of course, were born of the union between European fur traders and our First Nations peoples. The result was a people with knowledge of and respect for the land, an adventuresome spirit, a drive and determination, and a people dedicated to freedom. The voyageurs, working for 16 to 18 hours each day, paddled and portaged across this province and across this land at speeds that many of us would find incomprehensible, all of which they accomplished with about 200 pounds strapped to their backs. They helped to build what would become Canada, what would become the province and the nation that we love.

The coureurs de bois ran the rivers and woods of early Canada carrying messages and medicines, supplies and furs, and battling the elements—both the physical elements and the natural elements. From these rugged souls, now symbolic of the Métis culture, grew a people with a unique lifestyle, a unique attitude, who valued their freedom and independence. Indeed, long before their official recognition in the Constitution Act, they stood with all peoples in Canada and fought for the freedom of our country, of those fighting against a tyranny throughout the Second World War and many other wars throughout this country's history.

The Métis rallied behind Louis Riel, a Métis who had helped bring the province of Manitoba into being in a fight for the land they loved. Though they were denied the land they had settled by the Red River, they survived and prospered. Though governments refused to recognize them and, again, pushed them from their community at Batoche, they survived. The Métis are a strong people. Their strength helped build Canada and this province. They helped keep our country safe. They helped protect and preserve the freedom that we oftentimes take for granted, but which enables us to stand in the Legislature today and make laws for the province we know as Ontario.

For this and for their part in our history and what we as a province and country are today, they deserve our respect and our recognition.

Pour cela et pour le rôle qu'ils ont joué dans notre histoire et dans ce que sont devenus notre province et notre pays aujourd'hui, ils méritent notre respect et notre reconnaissance.

So I say, in closing, on va se revoir. À la prochaine. Prends soins de toi. L'Ontario connaît et honore votre passé, votre présent, puis votre futur dans la province.

We honour your past, your present and your future in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Chiarelli:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to help honour the Métis Nation of Ontario.

This proclamation speaks to the distinct culture, identity and heritage of the Métis people, and very significantly mentions the ongoing contributions of the Métis in Ontario. This is important. They are now building on the strengths of their history, heritage and wisdom to build a stronger Métis Nation and a stronger Ontario.

The Métis Nation of Ontario today is a vibrant, energetic, responsible, contributing people actively engaged in education and economic development at all levels—a community of peoples who live and work in every sector throughout this province.

It was not that many years ago that the relationship between the government of Ontario and the Métis Nation was not as strong as it is today. Today, Ontario's relationship with the Métis Nation of Ontario has become a series of historic events which continue to strengthen our relationship.

On July 7, 2004, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Métis Nation of Ontario signed a four-point interim harvesting agreement that recognized the Métis Nation of Ontario's harvest card system. This historic agreement meant that Métis rights holders hunting for food to feed their families would not be charged unless in violation of safety standards or conservation. We look forward to celebrating with the Métis Nation of Ontario when the long-term agreement on harvesting is signed.

In addition, on November 17, 2008, Ontario and the Métis Nation of Ontario signed the historic framework agreement recognizing the unique history, identity, customs, practices, traditions and rights of the Métis communities in the province. This agreement provided a framework for the parties to work together for a better future together.

Since the signing of the framework agreement, two other relationship agreements were signed, with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and agreements with other ministries are being discussed.

As well, Ontario's new relationship fund has provided the Métis Nation of Ontario and its communities with the capacity to participate in meaningful consultations with government and the private sector. Indeed, in the first six months of the 2009-10 fiscal year, the Métis Nation of Ontario received over 300 consultation notices, and is currently involved in consultation activities for 50 major



and medium projects across the province. These are in the energy, mining, forestry and infrastructure sectors.

The Métis Nation of Ontario has developed an economic development strategy to create wealth for the Métis Nation, and Ontario's economic policy will assist them in moving forward with their plans.

When Premier Dalton McGuinty was in opposition, he proposed that there should be a chair of Métis studies. That proposal has become a reality, and the chair of Métis studies is now in place at the University of Ottawa.

Incidentally, I have to say as a member from Ottawa that I'm very proud that the head office of the Métis Nation of Ontario is in the city of Ottawa, and I, too, want to welcome the special guests we have here today.

In closing, I know I speak for everyone here today in saying we all look forward to celebrating 2010 as the Year of the Métis and the continuation of our strong relationship together.

I again welcome them and thank them for being here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Sault Ste. Marie.

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** I'm pleased to participate today in expressing my support for the 2010 Year of the Métis Nation and to recognize the guests that are here with us to share this year with us and also this very, very important historic and cultural recognition.

It's my pleasure to join the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and the member from Ottawa West-Nepean in acknowledging the unique history, culture and people that the Métis individuals are in Canada, and to commemorate 2010 as the Year of the Métis.

As a point of interest, our own caucus member from Brant, Dave Levac, is of Métis descent. I don't know how many people knew that, but I know that he has expressed to me that this is a very proud year for the Métis as well and he shares in that support.

In particular, I want to recognize Gary Lipinski, the president of the Métis Nation. I know that Mr. Lipinski has been instrumental in enhancing and strengthening relationships, certainly with the government of Ontario.

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As many of you know, Sault Ste. Marie is home to the historic Métis council. The distinct culture of the Métis Nation of Ontario has evolved from a rich and dynamic history of European fur traders and aboriginal people in the 18th and 19th centuries, as has been referenced today. Harvesting and hunting was an integral part of the Métis community and certainly part of the culture in Sault Ste. Marie. The modern-day Métis community of Sault Ste. Marie is still rooted in the historic culture of the community, and they are one of the four founding peoples, obviously, recognized by the Constitution Act.

Métis people assisted new settlers adapting to the harsh climate of this country. The Métis worked to clear land and plant crops and were instrumental in the trade industry that existed at that time in our country. It is important that we recognize and celebrate their contri-

butions to the building of provinces in this country and to our national unity.

The Métis were obviously instrumental in the entry of Manitoba into Confederation in 1870, and today the Métis are involved in all facets of Canadian society and continue to contribute to the building of our province and our country.

The Métis Nation of Ontario has contributed so much to the enhancement and the preservation of Métis culture in Ontario that it is very fitting that we recognize this year in celebration of the Métis Nation.

Today we have a much better understanding of and appreciation for the dynamic history of the Métis Nation and its contribution to the building of Canada. I can say, as a former high school history teacher, having spent many lessons discussing with young people in our community in Sault Ste. Marie the events and the factors that helped to shape and build our country, that the story of Louis Riel and the Métis Nation and the contributions of the Métis people to our country are at times controversial but no less important. They certainly play a very important role in the making of our country. I know that the students I taught as a high school teacher were always very intrigued, interested and took away very valuable lessons from the story of Louis Riel and that time period in Canadian history. I want to thank the representatives who are here today for continuing to make us aware of the challenges and the issues that Métis people in Ontario and in Canada face and for being here today.

I think it's also important to mention the recent progress with the Métis community. As you're aware, the Ontario government and the Métis Nation signed an historic agreement on November 17, 2008, in which we jointly agreed to promote and facilitate the recognition and advancement of the Métis people in Ontario. This framework has set a new course for a collaborative relationship between the Ontario government and the Métis people of Ontario. This framework is certainly very important, and we will continue to work with the Métis Nation of Ontario to improve the well-being of Métis children, families and communities while working to protect and promote the distinct culture, identity and heritage of the Métis people.

We are also encouraging economic partnership opportunities and recognize and respect Métis traditions, structures and institutions. We remain committed to building trust, prosperity and hope by expanding opportunities for Métis people in Ontario, together with First Nations and Inuit peoples living in the province, and we continue to work to preserve their distinct culture.

I want to recognize the minister and Mr. Lipinski for the great work they're doing and the great work that the Métis community continues to do in my community of Sault Ste. Marie. I certainly think that as a government, being the first government in this province to create the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, we have taken a very notable step forward in helping to build those relationships and dedicate specific resources, staff and the like to



recognizing that the aboriginal peoples of the province of Ontario play a very important role in its well-being.

Again, it's a pleasure to participate in the discussion today and to recognize the important contribution and rich heritage of the Métis people.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** As the PC critic to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, I'm honoured to rise this afternoon in support of the declaration of 2010 as the Year of the Métis. I want to thank my friend Dr. Alex Roman for his assistance in the preparation of these remarks, which I extend to the House today on behalf of the loyal official opposition.

On December 9, 2009, the House of Commons of Canada adopted the following motion by unanimous consent:

"That, in the opinion of the House, the government should utilize next year, 2010, to commemorate the Year of the Métis in recognition of the 125th anniversary of the historic events of 1885 in Saskatchewan; and further, the government should recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of the Métis Nation across Canada which have enriched the lives of all Canadians socially, economically, politically and culturally."

As Métis National Council President Clément Chartier has stated, "The Year of the Métis will be an opportunity to commemorate the Métis who fought defending their people at the Battles of Duck Lake, Fish Creek and Batoche 125 years ago. It will also be a year of celebrating Métis culture and heritage, which now flourishes in this country."

The entire world witnessed the Métis Nation's participation in the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games and beheld the richness and vibrancy of Métis culture, which is an integral part of Canada's national heritage and cultural mosaic.

The Year of the Métis Nation will also include the "Back to Batoche" celebrations, which will be held from July 18 to 25 in Batoche, Saskatchewan, the site of the final battle of the Northern Resistance.

The Métis people came into existence as a result of the fur trade. They were the offspring of European traders and First Nations women, independent in spirit, living a lifestyle of hunting, trapping and freighting with trade and commercial endeavours.

Batoche was settled in the early 1870s by Métis. They had been forced to leave Manitoba's Red River settlement by federal government policies that ignored their rights in order to accommodate the anticipated flow of European settlers to the region.

The Red River Rebellion, which was led by Louis Riel, was touched off by federal surveyors who refused to acknowledge traditional Métis land holdings in that district.

Louis Riel is credited with leading negotiations that led, in 1870, to the establishment of Manitoba as Canada's fifth province, but ill feelings from the rebellion, coinciding with an influx of European settlers, extin-

guished a government pledge to give the Métis a 1.4-million-acre land base.

By 1884, Métis who had moved to the Batoche settlement on the South Saskatchewan River were encountering some of the same problems they experienced at Red River. In anticipation of white settlement, federal land surveyors were dividing up the Métis traditional riverfront lots using the square, range-and-township format employed in central Canada at the time.

With the disappearance of the buffalo, Métis calls for help in their transition to farming life and the education of their children were ignored by Ottawa.

The Métis were not alone in their grievances with central Canada. Cree Chief Big Bear was trying to establish a coalition of First Nations to negotiate more favourable treaty terms for the First Nations of the northwest, many of whom were starving and having trouble adjusting to a new way of life on the reserves. And white settlers in the region were angered that the federal government was treating them unfairly, especially with its decision to construct the new national railway more than 100 miles south of the proposed route.

Through the fall and bitter winter of 1884-85, Louis Riel attempted to negotiate with Ottawa not only on behalf of his Métis people but also on behalf of all the First Nations and white settlers of the region.

On March 19, 1885, he established a provisional government at Batoche, naming himself president and Gabriel Dumont military commander. The Métis pressed their cause by taking prisoners at Batoche and occupying nearby Duck Lake.

The first battle of the North-West Resistance—between Métis and First Nations forces and the North-West Mounted Police—occurred on March 26, 1885. Louis Riel's men forced their opponents to retreat. Riel himself limited casualties on the side of the North-West Mounted Police by forbidding his fighters from pursuing the retreating enemy.

Alarmed at the success of the North-West Resistance, Ottawa sent more than 5,000 troops under General Middleton.

Led by the agile commander Gabriel Dumont, the Métis excelled at guerrilla tactics as highly mobile fighters ready with their surprise strikes at lightning speed.

Dumont would have preferred to do battle with Middleton in accordance with these tried and true tactics, but it was Riel, who believed that God sided with the righteous cause of the Métis, who ordered that they should make a stand at Batoche. On May 15, 1885, Riel surrendered to the federal forces and was subsequently put on trial for treason. He was hanged later that year, on November 16.

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Today, Louis Riel is widely recognized as a father of Manitoba. November 16 has been declared Louis Riel Day in Canada, and Manitoba has recently renamed its Family Day holiday in February after him as well. As Canadians gain a deeper understanding of the cause of



the Métis and of the precipitating factors of the northwest conflict of 1885, greater momentum occurs for the complete rehabilitation and exoneration of Louis Riel.

Each year on November 16, members of the Métis Nation of Ontario gather on the grounds of the Parliament of Ontario here at Queen's Park, before the statue commemorating the northwest conflict, to celebrate the life and role of Louis Riel. I was proud to attend that ceremony this past fall. They all wear the familiar richly decorated Métis sash that I'm proud to wear in this House today in honour of our Métis Nation.

I would like to propose to all members of this House that the Ontario Legislature consider taking some proactive steps to likewise celebrate Métis heritage. We should consider renaming the statue of the Northwest Rebellion in honour of Louis Riel and the Métis Nation, and also consider placing a portrait of Louis Riel within the Legislative Building.

In addition, we could consider changing the name of the conflict to "Northwest Resistance," and that Louis Riel Day become a formal provincial day of observance in Ontario, with appropriate educational materials on Métis history and culture developed by the Ministry of Education for inclusion in the course of studies in all Ontario high schools. Finally, we could consider that the Métis sash be formally declared the Ontario provincial sash, alongside other Ontario insignia such as the Ontario tartan.

I offer these suggestions to the Premier and his government for their consideration and, perhaps, for consideration by a legislative committee, perhaps the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Métis were a people who hunted buffalo like their aboriginal brothers; created stores and businesses like their European relatives; valued the education of their children; cherished their independence; developed their own language, incorporating French and Cree; honoured their patron saint, Joseph; and enjoyed, and continue to enjoy today, a rich cultural life of festival, song and dance. Today they are making significant strides in their struggle to be recognized as a distinct people with land, economic and social rights similar to their First Nations counterparts.

We welcome representatives of some of the Métis nations here today and thank them for coming. We really do appreciate the opportunity we've had this afternoon to discuss these issues. In closing, I want to say that long after the final volley, the battle of Batoche continues.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm very pleased to be here this afternoon to support the commemoration of 2010 as the Year of the Métis.

Gary Lipinski, it's really great to see you here today. Gary has done a great job as president of the Métis Nation of Ontario for the last few years. I want to acknowledge in this Legislature as well his predecessor, Tony Belcourt, who became a good friend of mine. Tony did a lot of work as well to support the growth of the Métis Nation in Ontario.

We've heard a lot of history today, but I want to talk about a couple of the fun things that happen with the

Métis Nation. I've had the opportunity to attend a number of general assemblies with the Métis Nation—I think a total of six over the years. They usually hold it each year in July at some community in Ontario; it could be a larger community or it could be a very rural community.

I want to talk about going up one time to Eagle Lake, just west of Kirkland Lake. My wife and I went there for three days and had a wonderful time. One of the nice things about the Métis Nation of Ontario is that they love their song and dance. They had us up dancing and playing to the fiddle, and I can tell you that they had two songs I'll always remember, the Jean Chrétien Breakdown and the Ernie Eves Sidestep. They did them specifically for myself and one of the Liberal members who was there. They were two songs they played that day, and we had a wonderful time.

We've also had the general assembly in Penetanguishene, Ontario. And Gary, any time you want to bring the general assembly back to north Simcoe, you're very welcome. We'd love to have you there again. It's a great opportunity.

The reality is, in our community of Simcoe North, we have the largest concentration of self-identified Métis in the province of Ontario. There are over 2,000 members as we speak, but probably 5,600 could be identified in north Simcoe. They belong to the Georgian Bay Métis Council. Each and every year, they have a number of events that are fun to go to that really promote their heritage and their culture, one of course being the Christmas season, with the Christmas spirit we enjoy at their offices.

This year, on August 7, we have Métis Day at the historic Discovery Harbour in Penetanguishene. They have the whole grounds turned over to support the cultural events and show the history, the way food was cooked over the years, dance etc. It's a great, great day, and I would welcome anybody who wanted to take an afternoon to go up into Simcoe county to see Huronia Historical Parks and historic Discovery Harbour. They would really enjoy Métis Day—just kind of an ad at the same time.

Then, of course, on September 18 of this year we have what we call the Rendezvous gathering. It's held each year in the francophone community of Lafontaine. Métis Nation groups from all over Ontario visit Lafontaine—another fun day supporting the culture and heritage of the Métis here in Ontario.

I think the most important day of the year for the Métis Nation is November 16. I know a number of us have attended the events here at Queen's Park.

I fully support some of the suggestions made by my colleague Ted Arnott, the critic for aboriginal affairs. I think some of the ideas he's had, particularly with the renaming of the statue, are long overdue. It's time for the government, the opposition and the third party to all support these sorts of initiatives. I think it would be very well supported by the Métis Nation as well.



I want to welcome you all here today, along with my colleagues in the PC Party. We really support this commemoration today. I hope it's a great year, and I hope everybody gets out to as many Métis Nation events as possible this year to see the fine culture, history and heritage of this group.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'll be sharing my time with the member for Timmins–James Bay.

It's my great pleasure to speak on behalf of New Democrats in support of this motion declaring 2010 the Year of the Métis in Ontario, and to also welcome the members of the Métis Nation who have come to Queen's Park today to celebrate with us.

The story of Canada, of our country's emergence as a nation, cannot be truly told without reference to the Métis people. They are a nation literally born out of the momentous meeting between European colonists and aboriginal nations. All schoolchildren are taught the grand foundational stories of the fur trade and the buffalo hunt and how crucial both were to the growth of our nation and the opening up of the West. But too often, the central role of the Métis in that history is glossed over or given only passing reference.

In truth, the Métis were involved in every facet of the fur trade, acting as trappers, guides, interpreters, merchants, agents, voyageurs and many other roles. They hunted buffalo to make pemmican in order to feed outlying communities and trading posts. They shared the knowledge of the land that they had learned from their aboriginal elders with the newcomers, who were often unprepared for survival in the climate of the northwest.

The demise of the buffalo and the decline in the fur trade, combined with the annexation of the northwest by the Canadian government, brought about an end to the traditional economy of the Métis. The Red River Rebellion of 1869 grew out of the Métis desire to protect their rights and way of life against an aggressive and distant government.

Louis Riel, the Métis leader of that rebellion, is regarded as a hero to a great many Canadians today, and as one of our country's pioneering champions for minority rights. His legacy and unjust execution at the hands of the federal government of the day, following the Northwest Rebellion, is remembered each year in ceremonies across the country on Louis Riel Day—including ceremonies here at Queen's Park, which I've had the pleasure of attending.

The Manitoba Act of 1870, which created the province of Manitoba, recognized Métis claim to aboriginal title. The Dominion Lands Act of 1879 recognized that claim as well. The federal government, however, unilaterally extinguished these claims through individual land and grants scrip. Denied the recognition of their collective rights, the Métis became Canada's "forgotten people."

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While they may for a time have slipped from view, the Métis people did not disappear. They have remained a vibrant, engaged and active community. In the years

since the Red River Rebellion and the Northwest Rebellion, the Métis have distinguished themselves, not only in their steadfast defence of their community and rights but also through their active engagement with the larger community. In the same spirit that motivated their ancestors to teach hapless settlers the skills they needed to survive on the harsh prairie, Métis have continued to make a valuable contribution to our province and country. They are decorated veterans of past conflicts who continue to serve with distinction in Canada's armed forces. Métis have distinguished themselves in fields as diverse as music, medicine, industry, education, art and the law.

The Métis of Ontario have been an important voice speaking out for the need to take care of our natural environment. In fact, I expected the member for Simcoe North to mention this, but I was very proud to stand with many Métis people and talk to them during the protests around the site 41 landfill problem that was occurring there. We saw the Métis people very much engaged in that fight against dump site 41, again speaking out on the environment as they have always done.

It is only fitting that we honour a people who have been such a crucial part of our history, who have given us so much and who continue to make a significant contribution to making Ontario a fairer and more just place. They deserve to have a year named in their honour—absolutely.

I believe, however, that naming 2010 the Year of the Métis in Ontario is not the only thing that we should be doing. Though recognized by the Constitution of 1982 as one of Canada's aboriginal people, the Métis have never received the benefits governments grant to status Indians and Inuit. In its final report, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples stated, "It is unjust and unreasonable to withhold from Métis people the services and opportunities available to other aboriginal peoples."

Here in Ontario, we have only in the last few years reached an agreement with Métis people confirming their right to harvest animals for food within their traditional territories. Simple justice calls out to us to speak in one voice and to call on the federal government once and for all to end this discrimination. It is the right thing to do. It is the fair and just thing to do. It's a simple gesture of thanks for the priceless contribution the Métis have made to our history and to our nation.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** J'aimerais m'exprimer, comme le critique en matière des affaires autochtones de la part du caucus NPD, pendant cette journée qu'on prend aujourd'hui à l'Assemblée pour donner nos vues, nos déclarations, même nos pensées et tous les autres rêves qu'on peut avoir comme citoyen de cette province, mais spécialement pour ceux qui sont Métis.

Vous savez que la langue des Métis était le cri ou d'autres langues autochtones et le français. C'est pour cette raison que je veux faire ma déclaration en français.

C'est intéressant aujourd'hui, à cette Assemblée, qu'on prend chacun 15 minutes, chaque caucus, pour s'exprimer pendant cette journée importante. Ce n'est pas



pour dire que ce n'est pas important, ni pour dire que ce n'est pas apprécié, parce que je suis sûr que mes amis, mes collègues, tels que France Picotte et d'autres qui sont ici aujourd'hui, vont dire que c'est une journée spéciale. Il faut remercier le gouvernement et M<sup>me</sup> Smith pour avoir accordé les 15 minutes.

Je veux dire que c'est beau de dire de belles paroles, mais on sait qu'il y a beaucoup de boulot et beaucoup de chemin à faire. On sait que la communauté métisse à travers cette province, ainsi qu'au Manitoba et dans d'autres provinces, œuvrent pour trouver leur place dans cette province qui est égale aux autres dans cette province quand ça vient à beaucoup de matières.

On regarde les efforts des Métis à travers la province, quand ça vient au développement économique. C'est quoi l'histoire? La majorité du monde dans la communauté métisse se trouve, en comparaison, un peu—comment dire?—moindre, quand ça vient à l'égalité économique et sociale dans cette province.

Puis on se demande la question : « Pourquoi? ». Ce n'est pas la faute de ce gouvernement, ni du gouvernement avant celui-là, mais je pense que c'est la faute de nous tous comme citoyens qui n'ont pas vu que c'était nécessaire que tous les peuples dans cette province, Métis inclus, aient l'habileté de trouver leur place dans cette province quand ça vient à l'économie.

On voit qu'il y a beaucoup d'intérêt ces jours-ci, spécialement dans le nord de l'Ontario, quand ça vient aux ressources naturelles. On a entendu parler du « Ring of Fire », puis on a entendu parler d'autres projets comme le « Victor diamond mine », De Beers, Musselwhite et d'autres projets qu'on voit. Mais où est la place pour les Métis dans tous ces projets? On n'a pas encore aujourd'hui en place dans cette province, en cette année, quelque chose d'aussi simple que de dire qu'il y aura un partage des revenus quand ça vient à ces projets, non simplement pour les autochtones, mais aussi pour les Métis, où ça fait du bon sens.

Quant à moi, si on veut faire le développement dans ces parties-là de la province, on sait que la majorité du monde qui demeure là est qui? Ce sont les autochtones; ce sont les Métis. Ce sont eux autres qui sont là chaque jour et qui œuvrent dans des situations assez déplorables pour trouver une vie pour eux et pour leur famille. On a besoin, nous dans cette Assemblée, non seulement de prendre 15 minutes pour donner nos déclarations, pour dire, « On est content de signaler la contribution des Métis », mais de dire ce que chacun de nous va faire, ce qu'on va faire comme membre individuel de cette Assemblée, ce qu'on va faire comme chefs de parti et ce qu'on va faire comme parlementaires pour assurer qu'on peut avancer la situation pour les Métis et les autochtones dans cette province.

Vous le savez : beaucoup d'entre vous ont passé à travers les communautés et vous avez vu, vous avez visité, vous avez mangé, vous avez été au souper, vous avez été aux événements avec les Métis et les autochtones de cette province, et ce qu'on trouve, franchement, est épouvantable. On voit de la pauvreté ici en

Ontario comme on n'en croirait pas, à moins que tu sois là toi-même. Si tu regardes les communautés autochtones à travers cette province, c'est une pauvreté qui est vraiment fessante. C'est remarquable, que c'est encore la situation aujourd'hui dans ce pays.

Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire comme parlementaires et comme Assemblée pour s'assurer qu'on peut trouver des solutions à moyen terme et à long terme? On sait que les autochtones et les Métis ont de la patience. Ça fait des années qu'ils attendent leur jour au soleil, comme mon bon ami M. Pouliot disait déjà. Mais l'affaire, c'est qu'on veut savoir un temps assez raisonnable où le Parlement de l'Ontario et le Parlement du Canada vont prendre des mesures et vont faire ce qui est nécessaire pour avancer la situation pour nos peuples autochtones et Métis dans cette province et dans ce pays, pour s'assurer que les petites filles et les petits garçons qui sont nés dans nos familles vont avoir la chance d'avoir un emploi, quand ils auront 19, 20 ou 22 ans, qui est plus qu'un emploi où on travaille seulement comme journalier quelque part sur un projet minier, ou comme journalier sur un projet quelque part dans le nord de l'Ontario ou dans le sud de l'Ontario. Ils veulent avoir l'opportunité d'avoir une éducation pour dire qu'on peut faire la concurrence et la compétition avec n'importe qui, et qu'on peut être fier de dire : « Je suis Métis; je suis autochtone », et trouver sa place dans cette province.

Mais, mes amis parlementaires, ça ne va pas arriver avec des mots seulement. Ça ne va pas arriver avec de belles déclarations qu'on fait ici à l'Assemblée, même avec les miennes. Ça va devenir la réalité quand on se dit que c'est l'affaire à faire ce qui est juste et bonne pour tous les citoyens de cette province, y inclus les Métis et les autochtones.

On veut s'assurer que les petits gars et les petites filles qui sont élevés vont avoir une bonne éducation et qu'ils peuvent faire la concurrence avec les autres dans cette province. On veut s'assurer que les questions environnementales qui ont besoin d'être regardées d'une manière très sérieuse pour s'assurer que les projets qui sont faits dans leurs communautés, comme dans d'autres, sont pris au sérieux, et qu'on peut prendre leur éducation et leur pensée et leur être, comme personne—c'est ce qui est important quand ça vient à protéger cet environnement. Et, je dois dire, qu'on peut contourner l'assimilation, parce que, franchement, c'est ça ce qui se passe. On voit une assimilation dans les communautés autochtones; on l'a vue dans la communauté Métis comme on ne le croirait pas.

Il n'y a pas un francophone dans cette Assemblée, moi-même inclus, qui ne peut pas dire qu'il vient d'une communauté autochtone d'une manière ou d'une autre. Mon grand-père était autochtone. Je ne m'appelle pas Métis parce que j'étais assimilé. Et c'est un problème. J'ai compris, comme francophone, dès le début, quand j'ai commencé à travailler, que c'était plus facile à demeurer en Ontario et devenir anglophone. Donc, tu t'en vas avec les anglophones, puis tu espères qu'une bonne journée, tu vas être capable d'avancer avec le reste



du gang, comme ils disent. Mais ça m'a pris un point dans ma vie pour réaliser que j'étais francophone et que j'avais besoin de trouver ma place, comme francophone, en Ontario.

Le même a besoin d'être dit pour les Métis, parce que l'assimilation qui est arrivée avec les Métis depuis des années, pendant les deux dernières siècles, est vraie, et on peut la voir concrètement dans nos communautés. Combien de familles et d'individus à travers cette province viennent d'une ligne autochtone mais ne le disent pas? Ce n'est pas parce qu'ils en ont peur. Dans cette société aujourd'hui, on n'a pas peur de ces affaires-là. Ce n'est pas parce qu'on pense que c'est une méchante affaire. C'est parce qu'on était assimilé, puis on ne sait pas où aller.

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Une des autres affaires, je pense, qu'on a besoin de voir, c'est comment on peut contourner cette assimilation dans notre province et s'assurer que les Métis dans cette province sont capables de trouver leur place.

Donc, je demande aux membres de l'Assemblée qui sont ici et aux autres—je sais qu'ils travaillent très fort aujourd'hui à leur bureau—de dire qu'on ne va pas seulement faire des déclarations, qu'on ne va pas seulement donner de beaux mots, mais qu'on va prendre des mesures concrètes pour que la vie des autochtones et des Métis dans cette province puissent avancer d'une manière que l'on peut regarder et dire, as Churchill said, that this was “our finest hour.”

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ms. Smith has moved that this House commemorates 2010 as the Year of the Métis and that the Ontario Legislature recognizes and honours the distinct culture, identity and heritage of the Métis people in the province, as well as the historic and ongoing contributions of the Métis in Ontario.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'ai une pétition des gens de Sudbury et de Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to ... cardiac patients,” under certain conditions, and cancer patients; and

“Whereas” since “October 2009, insured PET scans” are “performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We ... petition the Legislative Assembly” as follows: “to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the clerks' table with page Darcy.

### ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** “Whereas Natural Resources Canada has cancelled the ecoEnergy Retrofit for homes program and the Ontario government has committed to matching grants up to \$5,000;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Commit to the continuance of the provincial portion of the ecoEnergy grants.”

I agree with this petition, and I'm pleased to affix my signature and pass it to my page, Carrington.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 POSANT LES FONDATIONS DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA CROISSANCE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 15, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts / Projet de loi 16, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2010 et édictant ou modifiant diverses lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I was able to start my leadoff speech last week and I look forward today to concluding that leadoff speech.

There's a lot to cover before we go into the details of this budget, this bill, G16. Before I go into the details of the budget itself, I want to say that a lot has happened since I was last standing here in this chamber. A lot has happened with the company that was hired by the Liberal government to advise it on the privatization of some of the largest, most critical assets that exist in the public sector in this province.

Today, the Premier of this province, Dalton McGuinty, gave another vote of confidence to the company Goldman Sachs, which was hired for \$200,000 to do an assessment of the sale of Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario and Ontario Lottery and Gaming.

Since I last spoke in this House, Goldman Sachs has been charged with fraud by the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States. For your information, Madam Speaker, and for the record, I think people should know what was reported in Reuters about Goldman Sachs and their performance, because frankly, they are



handling a very critical file. They are playing with the future stability, the future revenue, of this province. If in fact they have recommendations that are going to come forward, people should know what kind of company makes those recommendations.

Reuters reports: "The civil lawsuit" by the Securities and Exchange Commission "is the biggest crisis in years for a company that faced criticism over its pay and business practices after emerging from the global financial meltdown as Wall Street's most influential bank." Many other banks were left tattered by that global financial collapse, but Goldman Sachs did well. They did very well.

"It may also make it more difficult for the industry to beat back calls for reform as lawmakers in Washington debate an overhaul of financial regulations." Clearly, the performance of Goldman Sachs and the other companies that it worked with on Wall Street demanded action for regulation. It's a shame—it's tragic, in fact, that the regulation wasn't in place there a decade ago. But in fact a decade ago the regulation was being broken apart. That deregulation mania, one which continued on under the Bush administration, let Goldman Sachs do some very interesting things with the world's economy.

"Goldman called the lawsuit 'completely unfounded,' adding, 'We did not structure a portfolio that was designed to lose money.'" An interesting response to the charge, and one that people should keep in mind as they watch this story unfold.

"The lawsuit puts Goldman chief executive Lloyd Blankfein further on the defensive after he told the federal Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission in January that the bank packaged complex debt, while also betting against the debt, because clients had the appetite.

"'We are not a fiduciary,' he said."

It's interesting here. He says, "Yes, we have these very complex debt instruments. We packaged them up, we sold them to people and we bet against them at the same time. We didn't think that those packages would stand up. We thought that they would fold, that they would crash, and we bought insurance for that folding, that crashing. We are not a fiduciary," he says. "We don't have a responsibility to look out for the well-being of the customers." There's an old saying; it's Latin—we don't use Latin much in the House—*caveat emptor*, "buyer beware." Yet we in this House, an unwritten part of the budget we are debating today, have hired this company to advise on the disposition of \$60 billion worth of provincial assets, assets that generate \$4 billion a year in revenue, assets in Hydro One and OPG that are the levers that you need to shape the energy future of this province. We've hired this company to advise us—not "we"; Dalton McGuinty has hired this company to advise him on how to take this province forward. That should make people sit up and listen. They should notice what kind of advisers have been put onto the payroll.

Reuters gives more detail: "The case also involves John Paulson, a hedge fund investor whose firm Paulson & Co. made billions of dollars by betting the nation's

housing market would crash." He seems like a business person who understands the economy he's operating in. "This included an estimated \$1 billion from the transaction detailed in the lawsuit, which the SEC said cost other investors more than \$1 billion. Paulson was not charged....

"Goldman shares slid 12.8% on Friday, closing down \$23.57 ... on the New York Stock Exchange. The decline wiped out more than \$12 billion of market value, and trading volume topped 100 million shares, Reuters data show."

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I would say that major investors in the United States have spoken about their confidence in this company. Major investors have looked at the Securities and Exchange Commission, looked at what is going on in the rest of the world—I'll comment on that in a few minutes—and decided that maybe putting all these bets on Goldman Sachs isn't a good idea. One could only hope that the Premier, when he considers continuing to deal with this company, looks at how the rest of the world views these charges. They're not light; they're not casual; they're not fluffy. They're substantial and sequential.

Reuters goes on to say, "The perceived risk of owning Goldman debt, as measured by credit default swaps, increased. Treasury prices rose as investors sought safe-haven government debt."

In other words, people who had money in Goldman Sachs were running for the doors. They were going to buy treasury bonds or government money so their money would be safe. Are we continuing to have Goldman Sachs on the payroll advising us? Why, in this very chamber this morning the Premier indeed affirmed that we are. As I said in response to his question, I'm sure Goldman Sachs is greatly comforted that there's one politician on this planet who will stand up for them. I'm not that politician; the Premier of this province is.

Reuters goes on to say, under "More Severe than Expected"—that's a nice little headline—"These charges are far more severe than anyone had imagined," and suggest Goldman teamed with "the leading short-seller in the industry to design a portfolio of securities that would crash," said John Coffee, a securities law professor at Columbia Law School in New York."

That's a pretty strong statement, a pretty strong charge: A billion-dollar lawsuit is a big lawsuit.

Mr. Coffee goes on to say, "'The greatest penalty for Goldman is not the financial damages—Goldman is enormously wealthy—but the reputational damage,' he said, adding that 'it's not impossible' to contemplate that the case could lead to criminal charges."

Yes, Madam Speaker and members of the Legislature, the company that is advising this province on how to deal with \$60 billion of its most precious assets is being sued for \$1 billion by the Securities and Exchange Commission, and is a company about whose reputation prominent academics say it's not impossible that criminal charges



will be laid. That's where the confidence of this province has been placed.

"Goldman vowed to defend itself." Quoting Goldman spokespeople, "'The SEC's charges are completely unfounded in law and fact,' it said. 'We will vigorously contest them and defend the firm and its reputation.'"

"Defend ... its reputation": Those are wonderful words. To talk a bit about their reputation, I go to quotes from the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, a committee of Congress that has been charged to look into exactly why the world economy went over a cliff a few short years ago. At that congressional hearing just last week, emails were read from people who were fairly senior in the financial services sector in the United States. They're on the record:

"Emails from former Washington Mutual Inc. CEO Kerry Killinger read aloud during a congressional hearing this week illustrated clients' concerns about working with Goldman.

"In 2007, Killinger," the CEO of Washington Mutual, a fairly large company, "discussed hiring Goldman or another investment bank to help Washington Mutual find ways to reduce its credit risk or raise new capital, according to one of the e-mails, which Michigan Democratic Senator Carl Levin read during the hearing."

Levin quotes from the emails: "'I don't trust Goldie on this,' Levin quoted one of Killinger's emails as saying. 'They are smart, but this is swimming with the sharks. They were shorting mortgages big time while they were giving [Countrywide Financial Corp.] advice.'"

What does that mean? It means while they were advising a company, Countrywide Financial, on how to sell subprime mortgages, mortgages that had little chance of being paid back, mortgages that were weak on a variety of levels, at the same time they were placing bets in the financial markets that those mortgages would blow up.

That's the kind of company that senior executives in the United States refer to as "sharks," yet they've been hired by this province to analyze our public assets and advise on their disposal. That's who we hired. Others in North America and around the world have some sense of who they're dealing with, but apparently we don't.

We have a situation where the Securities and Exchange Commission is saying that Goldman Sachs put together a financial deal and didn't provide "vital information" to customers. So you have to ask yourself: Will Goldman Sachs, paid \$200,000 and probably more than that by this province, actually give us vital information about what they're really going to do with our assets? I think that's an open question. I would say, based on their history, one should be extraordinarily careful.

Yesterday, Sunday, the Times of London reported that in the UK, the Financial Services Authority is investigating Goldman Sachs. They write:

"FSA Probe into Goldman Sachs 'Fraud.'"

"The city watchdog is to examine the American case against the Wall Street giant as demands grow for a full inquiry."

So far, leaders of two of three of Britain's main political parties are calling for an inquiry into Goldman Sachs and their dealings with the UK and the financial sector.

"The city watchdog has launched a probe into the London operations of Goldman Sachs after shock claims that the giant international bank orchestrated a \$1-billion ... fraud against investors. Investigators from the Financial Services Authority are liaising with their American counterparts at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which took action against the bank in a New York court on Friday....

"It is understood the FSA is examining trades similar to the transaction that prompted the legal challenge from the American regulator."

So it isn't as though Goldman Sachs is engaged in activity only in the United States that causes government authorities to want to investigate its activities. No, on two continents, in a variety of countries, it has attracted the interest of lawmakers.

I need to throw this in because I thought it was one of the more delightful parts of the report: "The allegations against Goldman come ahead of bumper first-quarter results that will be revealed on Tuesday. The bank is expected to set aside \$5.5 billion in pay and bonuses for its staff."

Here's a company that seems to be doing fairly well—\$5.5 billion in bonuses. It makes the sunshine list in this province look like a list of kids' allowances. We're talking real money here: a billion here, a billion there.

We're helping them get richer. We're giving them the keys to all the financial records we have, all our data, so they can essentially do their own internal search of our financial situation. We pay them to do that.

I speak to this because this budget is not complete. This budget document before us doesn't reflect the plans of the government.

If you go back to the Globe and Mail column by Adam Radwanski about a week and a half ago, he talked about a meeting between the Premier and the editorial board of the Globe and Mail, where the Premier talked about this sale, talked about not wanting to look as though he was engaged in a process of burning the furniture to heat the house—although in fact that's all you can do, really, in this. That's what this is all about. He was looking for a place to put the money so it would look good.

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So, whatever we go through in this bill, either somewhere buried in the bill is an expectation of a large chunk of cash that's going to come from this operation or some other substantial financial transaction is going to happen coming out of all of that.

So, for us, when we talk about a bill that is partial, that stands between us and a clear view of the many sins of this government, this is a very substantial example.

I just want to note as well that the government of Germany, which had to deal with threats to its banking system, has asked the Securities and Exchange Com-



mission for detail and that the European Union is already investigating the monetary deals between Goldman Sachs and Greece earlier this decade—monetary deals whose ripple effect, whose consequences may destabilize one of the major currencies of the world, the euro. That's the kind of company that we have on the payroll.

Now, having talked about the quality of thinking that has gone into the financial planning in this province, the quality of consultants that have been hired to give this government advice on where to go forward on financial matters, I want to talk about some details in the budget itself.

In this budget, there's virtually nothing that deals with climate change, and yet this is a government that has said time and again that dealing with climate change is critical for this society, critical for this government and its priorities. When you go through this budget—and I have a copy of the document before me—there's only one small reference to climate change. For your information, Speaker, and for the information of those who may be watching us today, I just want to read an excerpt from the budget.

"As a leader in the green economy,"—so it claims—"Ontario is looking to the federal government to substantially extend its funding commitments for the environment, beyond carbon capture and storage projects, to support Ontario's transition to a prosperous low-carbon economy. The province calls on the federal government to show leadership on climate change, to help Ontario businesses take advantage of the changes that are coming to the North American market and to help create jobs for Ontarians."

And that's it; it's over. If you blinked when it went past, you would have missed it. Yet this government, time and again, has put forward the claim that it's a leader on climate change. If in fact there was a substantial investment in this budget that would address climate change concerns, it would have been trumpeted everywhere.

What we have in this budget, rather than investment, is a little paragraph saying, "Stephen Harper, do something." That's not climate change action, and that's not climate change leadership; that is simply making sure that you can say, "In our budget, we said something about climate change."

I'll say this to you as well, Speaker. Page 129, for those who want to dig through it—I had to dig through; it doesn't even make it on the index of topics. It's set aside.

This matters because in a budget you actually say to the world, "What are my priorities? Where will I put my money? Is it anywhere close to where my mouth is?" In fact, in this budget, climate change is not addressed other than, as I say, a little note to Stephen Harper: "Be good. Do something green today."

In Quebec, they allocate \$200 million a year to dealing with climate change. They have policies that state how they will reach their climate change targets. It's a five-year plan. They're trying to meet their Kyoto commitments. We don't have an allocation of cash in this

budget. We don't have policies spelling out how we will meet our targets.

In fact, if you look at the report that came out from the climate secretariat and the Minister of the Environment—whose seat is right there. If you looked at that when it came out before Christmas, you would see a very glossy report with a very powerful message, and that powerful message was, "We're not going to meet our climate targets." That's a shocking message. It was a lot grimmer than the full-colour, glossy pages of the report that was presented. It was a conclusion that was completely contrary to the arguments and the rhetoric that have been put forward by this government. There are no counter-balances to that report in this budget. In fact, this budget goes backward. It rolls back the clock of action that has to be taken on climate change.

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, shortly before Christmas, looked at the climate plan and noted that it wasn't going to meet its targets, noted that it was very vague in terms of exactly what steps would be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One of the things he talked about—the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario—was the fact that dealing with emissions from transportation was critical to the success of any plan that Ontario could put forward.

In order to deal with transportation greenhouse gas emissions, you have to deal with urban form and urban planning; you have to make sure that the infrastructure is there to allow for the development of rapid transit, for cycling and for walking. This budget could speak to that. It could talk to investments in infrastructure for non-car transportation, but it doesn't; it is silent.

If you look at the report of the Pembina Institute on the greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan, what it shows is that 60% of new growth over the next few decades is going to be on what are called greenfields—farmland, land that was not previously urbanized. If you do that, there are substantial impacts in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, sickness and death. All of those things are tied up, and in this budget, they are unaddressed.

Last week in question period, the Premier was asked how much money would be saved by cutting Transit City. In the budget that we're dealing with, a promise made to expand the transit system in the city of Toronto has been broken. The Premier has consistently said, "It's just being delayed. No, no, everything's fine. Don't you worry. Have a seat; have a lollipop. Be happy." What the Premier said in answer to the question was that this government would save \$4 billion in its cuts to Transit City. That's a lot of money. A \$4-billion cut means many lines not built. The Premier may be telling the truth when he says it's delayed, but unless you've heard differently, I don't know—delayed till what date? I don't think anyone else knows.

The mayor of the city of Toronto considers that it has been cut. Frankly, if things don't get started before the next election, given the vagaries of political life in Ontario, who knows if and when this so-called delay will



come to an end and the money will be spent? I would say that, for practical purposes, for our purposes, we should treat it as a cut.

If you look at the reality in the greater Toronto area, congestion now costs us \$5 billion to \$6 billion a year. That's a huge burden on the economic life of this region. That is a lot of money. It's half the size of the budget of the city of Toronto. Yet, instead of making the investment that would have put people to work and have them pay taxes, and instead of making the investment that would have allowed people to get to work in a timely way, giving them more time to live their lives and increasing the chances that they could look for jobs further and further afield, we've had a cut.

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New Canadians who live in the inner suburbs of the city of Toronto are going to take a hit. They will spend more time waiting for transit on cold corners in January and February when they should be on fast-moving streetcars, light rail vehicles that will take them from their homes to the subway system to work. They need to understand that this budget, with this cut, is reinforcing the social divides in this city, making it more difficult for low-income new Canadians to build the kind of life they want to live, making it more difficult for people who have cars to get around, and making things more difficult for those who have asthma or any kind of lung disease.

The Toronto Star, which is generally very supportive of this government and its budget, has been pointing out that what is called a deferral of spending is a mistake and will have negative impacts on the GTA and Ontario's economy. They pointed out in an article following the announcement of the decision that the withdrawal of funds for bus replacement will mean a reduction in service.

When you listen to the Premier or to his Minister of Finance, they will tell you that, yes, the budget for bus and streetcar replacement has been cut, but now municipalities can pay for it from the gas tax. What I say to you, Speaker, is that it just means that the pocket of money available to fund transit has been cut, not just for Transit City but for transit systems across the province. Ottawa, Kingston, London, Windsor, Thunder Bay and Sudbury are all going to take a hit because this government has decided to cut back on transit. That will force more people into their cars for longer drives, when this government says it is completely against that direction. This budget is a rollback of commitment to public transit, to the environment and to action on climate change.

If you ask the Premier or the Minister of Transportation about these cuts, what you hear back is a recitation of all the investments that have been made and all the good works claimed by this government. The Toronto Star, again, in response to those particular comments, said in an editorial that the answer was an embarrassment. The reality is that the investment is inadequate to the needs of the GTA, inadequate to the needs of this very large urban area and, frankly, inadequate to the needs of other urban areas in Ontario.

When you make a decision like this to cut critical investment in one area, you drive up costs in another area. Our critic for health, France Gélinas, can talk to you about the pressure on emergency rooms and on doctors' waiting rooms because people come in with respiratory diseases, asthma and heart disease, all related to air pollution. This decision will mean more people in emergency rooms, more people sick and, frankly, more people dying.

This is a decision where we need a change of heart from the Premier. We need the Premier to say very clearly, "This budget needs to be amended. This cut to Transit City is not sustainable, not defensible and has to be rolled back." That would be a good move on the part of the Premier that would elicit support from municipalities and citizens across this province.

People know that this is a tough budget and these are tough times. But a rollback of investment in public transit cannot be defended on any level—on any level. If you look at the polling that was published in the Toronto Star in the last few days asking people in the GTA what their big concerns are, transit is right at the top, because people are concerned about the air and concerned about getting around.

I want to go on to talk about the full-day learning plan. I think that what was brought forward by Dr. Charles Pascal made a lot of sense. As you would well know, Speaker, because you represent an area with a large population of young families, parents desperately need good-quality, affordable public daycare. So bringing forward a plan for full daycare makes a lot of sense, has a lot of positive outcomes.

What Dr. Pascal brought forward was an integrated plan for early childhood learning across this province. What he had done in his plan was to integrate it with early childhood education, making sure we had a system from early life on, through school, so that parents and children got the best. That made a lot of sense. If you'll remember, he said that you need to implement the whole plan. For it to work, it has to be integrated. All the pieces have to be there or you get into some very profound problems. He was right, because what we're seeing now—and I'm getting it from constituents in my riding; my guess is that others are getting it from constituents in their ridings—is that the plan as proposed puts in place huge problems for existing non-profit care. For people whose daycare centres are looking after four-year-olds and five-year-olds, they're finding that those kids will be moved out, they will lose subsidy spaces, and they will lose the number of kids that they can spread the cost of their administration over. So they have a much smaller economic base to operate from. That means financial crisis. That is a tremendous problem.

There's no question that full-day learning is a positive thing and needs to be expanded across Ontario. But right now, parents, daycare workers and children are in a situation of upheaval, a situation creating anxiety, a situation in which they don't know what kind of care is going to be there a year from now or, frankly, in



September. Things are moving very fast. It's April now. You know that in order to put in place a program and make sure all the funding is allocated intelligently, is accounted for, and that people are hired or moved from one position to another, it takes months, and yet we're not seeing that. What we've seen in this budget is a cherry-picking of some of the best parts of Dr. Pascal's report without the implementation of the network necessary to make sure that it functions well. That is a huge problem.

I've had a chance to talk about transit, climate change, daycare and this Premier's wrong-headed moves to allow a very controversial company to get its hands on the books of this province, but I also want to talk about the special diet. The move in this budget to eliminate the special diet for those on Ontario Works or ODSP is morally wrong, economically wrong, and wrong in terms of the health care of this province. It's short-sighted. It doesn't understand the needs of those who are very poor and working, trying to live in very difficult circumstances. People who are on welfare, who have a medical condition and who are going to lose their special diet allowance or have it cut back dramatically are going to find it very difficult to live.

A few years ago, in fact when I was running in 2006 in the by-election, I was in a coffee shop taking a break between rounds of canvassing. A young woman came up to me, well dressed, neat, clearly someone who had worked a good part of her life, well educated when she spoke. She was very thin. She came up, introduced herself and asked if I indeed was the candidate who was running. I said yes, I was. She said, "You need to know we are hungry. I'm disabled, and I'm hungry." People like her who are on disability support who have medical conditions, who need a special diet to keep their lives held together, who need more food so that the medical conditions they're dealing with don't become more profound, are facing a crisis.

1440

This announcement is a cruel announcement. It means that people are right now living with anxiety and trepidation about their future, as if they didn't have all kinds of other problems on their plates.

If, in fact, this government doesn't change course, does cut the special diet allowance, then I can tell you right now that more people will wind up in hospitals and in emergency rooms because they will not have had enough food to sustain their health. Chronic conditions will become acute. Long-term difficult problems will sharpen into crises. It is not wise economically or socially and it is not morally defensible to cut the food allowance for some of the most vulnerable people in this province, but that's what is on the table. It puts a huge burden on individuals and will put a huge burden on this society.

Just the other day, my colleague Michael Prue asked a question about social assistance, and I'll quote the exchange because I thought it was very useful.

"Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. On February 17, the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal ordered

the government to increase special diet allowance rates for special assistance recipients with various medical conditions within three months. Instead of increasing those rates, the McGuinty government, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, is asking for a one-year extension so it can eliminate the special diet allowance and reduce the same benefits that were awarded."

Michael Prue asked, "Why won't the government comply with the Ontario Human Rights Commission ruling and provide adequate special diet allowance payments as ordered?"

My colleague from Beaches-East York has had a long history of fighting for those who are poor, bringing their concerns to the attention of the public and doing his best to make sure that people whose lives are already difficult and desperate are not made even more difficult, more desperate.

That question was deflected to Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services, and she replied, "This is a very good question. The government will comply with the decision of the Human Rights Tribunal. We need more time to investigate and to see who qualifies for this new addition, to respect the decision of the human rights. That's the only reason we will comply with the decision of the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal."

Michael Prue was very direct in his response. He said, "That is not the case at all. The assistant deputy minister has filed an affidavit that set out exactly the opposite of what you have just said: that they are asking for the year in order to eliminate the program."

As you know from this budget, the program is going to be gone. That's what's happening. There is a substantial cut being put on the table—part of this budget. That's the reality.

Michael Prue went on, "This minister is refusing to answer the question. She implies that the current special diet allowance is not medically based, and she has said that before. Of course it is. Recipients must have specific medical conditions in order to receive the allowance."

If the government doesn't believe that people have those specific medical conditions, then they should interview the people who are receiving the allowances. They should talk to the doctors. But on a wholesale basis, to eliminate the special diet allowance for this vulnerable population is not defensible.

Michael Prue goes on to say, "The tribunal decision clearly states that the special diet allowances are inadequate. This arrogant government responds by doing away with the allowance altogether and effectively cutting the special assistance rates up to 20%. This is nothing less than cruelty. Why does this government think it is above the decision of the Human Rights Tribunal?"

I think that's the right question to ask, because the fate and well-being of many thousands of people are at stake.

Madeleine Meilleur replied, "The question that was asked by my colleague was: Why have we asked for



some time? First of all, you're partly right. We will appeal part of the decision, but there is another part that we will comply with, so we're asking for more time. Why are we asking for more time? It's because we need to review all the applications for a part of the special diet, and we need more time. We'll appeal one part, but the other part we will comply with, and we need more time to make the right decision and give those claimants what they deserve under the decision of the human rights."

The human rights tribunal has found that the diet is inadequate. They have found that people are not getting the nutrition that they need to live. They found that this government needs to take action. The response in this budget, in this document, is to cut. That is not defensible. It is simply not defensible.

When you look at this budget, you can in your ears hear the Premier speaking. He delivers the well-worn refrain that Ontario must adopt new ways of thinking to keep up with the times and move on with the future. That's one of the favourite things that he has to say. He'll say that old ideas are a thing of the past; we have to build a prosperous Ontario and build our prosperity with new thinking, not the old ideas of the past. That's what the Premier is constantly telling us. How can one argue against having new ideas? It sounds good. The real question is, what is the content of those ideas? When you look at the content of this budget, given the language that the Premier uses, we see that the prescription the Premier has brought forward is really, truly rooted in those very old ideas that haven't worked, tired ideas that actually paved the way for the very recession we're trying to crawl out of right now, that has created so much hardship for so many families that are still struggling today in Ontario.

As I said earlier, in fairness, there's no politician in this chamber who wouldn't say that this is a difficult time to bring forward a budget; that's the simple reality. The challenge of getting this province back on track and ensuring a brighter future for those people who are having trouble today is an important one. People have struggled a great deal during these very difficult times. I don't think any of us should underestimate exactly how difficult it's going to be to get us back on track. I think it will be very difficult. We have many years of wrong-headed decisions, of going down dead ends, of providing funding for that which doesn't need funding and cutting funds from those things that are critical. The magnitude of the job before us is significant, and the concern that people have when you go and talk to them is great.

Madam Speaker, as I'm sure you do when you go door to door and talk to people in your community, you hear about the anxieties that they have, the concerns that they face, the worries that burden their day-to-day lives. We know that this recession we have been going through, and which is not over, has had a huge impact on people's lives, has kicked the legs out from under many a person who has tried to put their life on track, tried to make sure that they had everything in place for a future. You don't need to look at the budget pages, and you don't need to

look at the fancy graphs; you just have to go and talk to the people of this province. This budget is not going to solve their worries—no budget could solve everyone's worries—but is it taking the province in the direction it needs to go? It doesn't meet that test. If a budget, in fact, falls short in one measure here or one measure there, I think the people of this province and all the parties in this House would say, "All right; it falls short in this or that measure." But when the core of the budget is one in which the long-term viability of our economy is not addressed, if this budget doesn't address the critical need for urban infrastructure that allows cities to function well, if it doesn't deal with environmental issues that in turn have a huge impact on health costs, if it doesn't deal with moral issues like the well-being of the poorest in this society, if it doesn't deal with the needs of families to ensure that they have the day care that they require, then a budget fails.

1450

This budget fails. Others will get up today and address the substance and direction of this budget. But for me, this is a budget that was ill-conceived, ill-executed and one that I would urge people to vote against.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Bob Chiarelli:** First of all, I want to thank the member for Toronto–Danforth in his very extensive assessment of the budget. I appreciate his social conscience and the philosophy that he brings to the task. However, he was more significant in what he did not address than in what he addressed. He addressed a lot of individual aspects of this budget. The most significant part of this budget is, in fact, the stimulus package and how it addresses the recession.

We know that every advanced economy in the world made a collective decision that they needed stimulus funding to save our economies, particularly to save manufacturing jobs. That hits home very, very significantly in Ontario, particularly in the automobile parts and automobile sectors. What is significant in this budget is that it renews and supports the \$32-billion stimulus spending to save jobs and create jobs. The best ammunition we have to help the social safety net is to create jobs, a healthy economy, so we have more wealth to share, so we can save the wealth from going in the wrong direction, which this budget does in very, very large measure.

Statistics Canada recently came out with the statistic that Ontario has the highest GDP of any economy in the North America. The Conference Board of Canada has indicated that we are heading for a 3.5% growth rate this year.

We are creating jobs, and creating those jobs and saving those jobs is what is going to help the social safety net. I empathize with the member—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The member from the Beaches and I don't necessarily agree philosophically on a lot of



things, but I can tell you that we certainly do agree on the comment he made regarding the Goldman Sachs issue.

I think we have to remember that the charges have been laid. There has been no admission or finding of guilt amongst them, but if the charges have any merit whatsoever, it would appear that this company has gone over the edge as far as what they have done in the marketplace and has gone a long way to causing many of the problems that the United States and indeed the world economy finds itself in.

The fact that Goldman Sachs is contracted with the Ontario government: It would be very prudent, to say the very least, if the government were to review that contract very, very carefully to ensure that the money of Ontario's taxpayers is being well looked after. When the red flag goes up, a prudent company, a prudent individual or a prudent government takes action in order to protect those whose responsibility it is to protect those tax dollars. I would like to hear from the government at their earliest opportunity that that contract is being reviewed and that the details of the work that Goldman Sachs has done are being scrutinized in order to protect the taxpayers of Ontario's dollars.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** In the two minutes available, first, I want to take the opportunity to thank the member from Toronto–Danforth, from the third party, for his lead as their critic. More formally, this is the first budget cycle I think he has been the critic for. I certainly have appreciated his work on the committee, as a member from the government side, and his thoughtfulness at those times. Although we don't always agree on all of the issues, he brings some pretty sound judgment to the process.

I want to pick up on where the member from Ottawa West–Nepean left off, and that's on the issue of investment in infrastructure. Clearly, we have to have focus in budgets. You can't be all things to all people, though we do spread the resources around. But we do have a \$32-billion commitment—this is the second major year of that—as part of the stimulus initiatives to create jobs and renew the infrastructure in this province.

We certainly have been investing in transit, in community infrastructure and in housing throughout the province. I want to speak briefly to my own riding area. We're making a \$700-million commitment in new and upgraded sports and recreation infrastructure in Toronto for the 2015 Pan American and Parapan American Games. As part of that, my riding will be a benefactor at the University of Toronto Scarborough, with a major new facility there as well. It will encourage and expedite the infrastructure spending for public access through public transit in that area.

The discussion—and it will go on, I'm sure—around investments in Transit City and investment in transit—this, as we have said, has not been abandoned in any way. Certainly these things will take longer. They will have to be spread over additional years, subject to what

Metrolinx is able to do with their funding formula. But there is a strong commitment to continue infrastructure spending to support the economy as we grow out of the recession we find ourselves in.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate hearing and commenting on the member from Toronto–Danforth, particularly his aspects about all-day kindergarten when he mentioned about what's taking place there.

There seems to be a large concern—and hopefully the government gets an opportunity to answer some of the concerns that are coming out regarding all-day kindergarten—on what the actual related costs are going to be to those individuals who are being removed from the daycares. When you meet with daycares, their area where they subsidize the younger individuals in attendance is made up by the costs that are paid and similar costs by the older individuals in those daycares who will now be removed from those daycares, which essentially means that those younger kids going to the daycares will have to pay more in order for it to be there for them to continue on in providing those services, which is going to have a large impact on a lot of individuals as well.

One of the other areas of concern is the ability to manage professional development days during all-day kindergarten. What's going to happen to those individuals and the obligations of the schools or those parents when those kids are not having to go to school on those days and they do not have a regular daycare that they go to? I would certainly hope that the individuals within the ministry would allow the various boards to enter into contractual agreements with the various service providers out there. This is a positive criticism, I hope, that all those service providers will be able to contract with the schools and provide a service locally so that in cases such as professional development days, those students still have an opportunity. Instead of being in kindergarten, they can still be taken care of, rather than the parents trying to scramble and find places for the kids to be on those days.

I very much appreciate the member, as I said, from Toronto–Danforth, and I look forward to his response.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Toronto–Danforth has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to thank the members from Ottawa West–Nepean, Halton, Pickering–Scarborough East and Oshawa. As all of you in this chamber know, sometimes speaking here can be a lonely experience, so I appreciate the fact that you listened to what I had to say.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** We surprised you.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I was very surprised. You had content.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Peter, don't be so negative.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** No, no. I'm not being negative. Sometimes people get up and have not necessarily listened to what you've had to say.



*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Now, now, be good, Doctor. I'm actually complimenting those who spoke.

1500

I want to speak, in the brief time I have, about the comments from the members from Ottawa West–Nepean and Pickering–Scarborough East. If, in fact, we're going to make sure that we have an economy that has a robust manufacturing sector in the future, the tax cuts for corporations in this budget are not going to do it. What they will do is reward very profitable banks and not help the manufacturing sector, which doesn't have much to report in the way of profits these days. If we are going to deal with the difficulties in the manufacturing sector, it would make more sense for us to be investing in them through tax credits for growth investment rather than giving large tax breaks to banks that frankly are doing fairly well. That's a consequential flaw in this budget.

I want to say as well that in the brief time I've been here in this Legislature, since 2006, I've heard about that \$30-billion investment in infrastructure every year. In 2006, I was talking to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal in estimates, and he told me then about the \$30 billion. Every year that \$30 billion, which is now getting time-worn, is being moved around.

Thank you for the opportunity to address these issues.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to be able to rise and speak in support of the spring 2010 budget bill. We've been chatting here about the challenges that the Ontario economy has faced. Certainly, economies the world over have just come out of a very, very difficult year. Ontario is no different: We've obviously had a situation where Ontario, just like other jurisdictions all over the world, has faced a sharp decline in government revenues at exactly the same time we've seen an increased demand for government services. And when we go to present our budget, that obviously creates a serious challenge.

We're quite focused on what we need to do with this budget. We know we need to create jobs, we need to help Ontario families and we need to establish the environment that will allow Ontario to grow in the future. We also know that reality is reality, that our revenues are not going to recover as quickly as we might like and that that means we need to look at how we can slow the growth in government spending, because we need to recognize the need to stimulate the economy and support families, but we also need to recognize fiscal reality.

That's why we put together our Open Ontario plan, first outlined in the throne speech and then elaborated in the budget, because it does precisely those things. It creates jobs, creates investment and sets the future for economic growth, all the time understanding that we are not working in an ideal fiscal environment.

I'd like to start off by talking a little bit about some of the investments around jobs and growth that are in this year's budget and in future budgets. Oddly, because I'm

a member who's from southern Ontario—you know that I'm from Guelph—I want to start by speaking about northern Ontario. I think that people who live in northern Ontario often think that we, here in the south, don't pay any attention to northern Ontario, and there's been a fair bit of reaction from the official opposition that they didn't really like the northern Ontario initiative.

It's hard for us here in the south to get an accurate read on it, so I was really interested about a week ago when I, as many people do, was sort of wandering into my constituency office over the weekend to try to catch up with paperwork. A chap who leases one of the other offices in the building said, "Liz, I want to talk to you about the budget." I had no idea what he wanted to talk about. It turned out that he wanted to talk about the northern Ontario initiatives.

This was a chap who had grown up in Wawa. He has a company that's based in Guelph. It does mobile communications in remote locations, and of course he still does a lot of work in northern Ontario—in very remote parts of northern Ontario. He was absolutely thrilled with our commitment to working in the Ring of Fire to bring on the chromite deposits.

I had never heard of chromite until a few months ago, so I think I'm like just about like everybody else in Ontario. If you're going to make stainless steel, you have to have chromite, and there's only one other deposit in the world. There isn't any other deposit. We've discovered that in northern Ontario, way north up near James Bay, in what's been labelled the Ring of Fire, there are substantial chromite developments.

We recognized in the budget that it's going to take a long time to develop those. But we also recognize that if we don't start, it won't happen.

He said, "You know, from the point of view of a northerner who still works in the north, that commitment in the throne speech, Open Ontario and the budget to working with northern Ontario is so important to those of us who work there in remote areas of northern Ontario, to know that the Ontario government sitting down here in Toronto is actually thinking about the future growth of northern Ontario and how we develop it." He was absolutely delighted that we are committed to appointing a Ring of Fire coordinator and that we've already started to allocate money—\$45 million over three years—to start to work with the First Nations and other people in the area to provide training so that when the development comes, people who actually live there will be able to get the jobs.

If we don't start working on the training now, when the development comes, it isn't going to be the local people who will benefit. We want to make sure that local people benefit.

There has been lots of reference to the \$32.5-billion investment that we have been making over two years in infrastructure to stimulate the economy. I don't know how carefully people have been following that, but in Guelph, that has been huge. We're receiving \$66 million for municipal infrastructure, and that goes for everything



from digging up what seems like every road in Guelph—at least, every road that leads to my constituency office seems to be dug up. Now that the good weather is here, the shovels are out, and all the roads are dug up again. That's part of that \$32.5 billion.

It also includes things like a new transit hub so that when the GO train comes to Guelph, all the municipal transit services, Greyhound, GO and Via transit services will all work out of one transit hub to make it easier for people. That's coming out of this \$66 billion.

We were successful in getting some rink money which is going to make a difference at various arenas and municipal places—also some of the recreational facilities at the Grand River Conservation Authority, which is a wonderful conservation authority, and upgrading some of their facilities as well.

One of the things has really caught the imagination of people in Guelph. We have a new city hall in Guelph, and we're investing in what's going to be, in the winter, an outdoor skating rink. In the summer, obviously it won't be ice; it'll be water. It'll also be a recreational area.

We're also spending, out of that \$32.5 billion, \$33 million at the University of Guelph. I'm sure there are some grads in the crowd here or at least on TV. The building that, over the years has variously been known as BGZ—botany, zoology and genetics—now it's Axelrod, and now it's going on to be the environmental centre; a building that was built in the early 1950s is going to be totally retrofitted. It's a totally inaccessible building. For anybody who isn't totally mobile, you can't get here from there just given the way the staircases are aligned, so it's going to be made accessible. It's also going to be retrofitted so it will be energy efficient. They found, when they started to rip the building apart, that, in fact, there was no insulation whatsoever. You can imagine this very large building, which is going to get bigger, with the fact that there was no insulation and single-glazed windows—just how much heat, and the expense of that was literally going up in the air.

1510

There are some really exciting things happening in Guelph. Because Guelph has always been very interested in education—in fact, two of these things are really quite important to my town. Guelph is a university town; it's also an auto manufacturing town, which means that we have been very, very hard hit in my constituency by the slump in the auto industry. So skills training is very important in my area. One of the figures that people give us—and the technology triangle is this KW-Guelph-Cambridge area; these data would be a little bit out of date now—is that there are 2,000 jobs that are unfilled in my area at the same time that there's a 10.1% unemployment rate. What that tells you is that there's a mismatch between the jobs in the new economy and the qualifications they need and the people who have been laid off.

While it's true that the auto sector is starting up again and people are getting hired back again, manufacturing in

my area has taken a horrendous hit. An old family-owned company, W.C. Wood, which has been producing freezers and refrigerators in Guelph for decades, went bankrupt. I was fortunate a few months ago to be at the opening of their job action centre, working with people who were laid off when the last of their plants was closed. It was interesting talking to the people who had been working on the floor at W.C. Wood for 20, 25, even 30 years in some cases, because they had come not even after high school graduation; they had gone on the floor at Wood before they even graduated from high school. Those folks, who were not young folks anymore, recognized that they were going to have to retrain to get a new job.

That's why the extension of the Second Career funding is so vitally important to my community. We are committed to provide funding for 30,000 additional clients for retraining. That's just absolutely crucial for the people in my riding.

The other thing I mentioned is that we're a university town, and we know, again looking at those jobs that are going unfilled, that the jobs of tomorrow are going to need people who have post-secondary education. We are providing \$310 million to increase the number of spaces for students in post-secondary education by 20,000 this September. We're going to be looking at international markets, internationally trained students and whether we can attract more internationally trained students. We need to make it clear that those 20,000 additional spots are for Ontario students. The internationally trained students whom we're hoping to attract are a different group of students. It isn't that we're setting up some sort of competition, because again, and I'm not sure that everyone is aware of this, the internationally trained students pay the full cost of tuition. They don't benefit from the grants that the provincial government gives to post-secondary institutions; they pay much higher tuition than Ontario students do.

But the reason that it's so important to attract internationally trained students is because they come to us, they bring their wealth of experience from all over the world and in many cases they choose to stay here. A lot of them fall in love with Guelph, I've got to tell you, and decide that they would like to stay. They enrich the province with the skills, the knowledge and the wealth of experience they bring from all over the world.

We're also looking at expanding online post-secondary opportunities, and again, that's important from a retraining point of view. Not everybody can give up everything and move to Guelph, so having online post-secondary education is really, really important to people in other communities. We're also looking at having our universities and colleges work more closely together, so that if you're in one place, you have more credits that can transfer to another if you decide that you want to switch programs. It's a whole bunch of things that are very, very important when we look at that planning for the jobs of the future and who's going to have the necessary education and skills to fill those jobs.



But one of the really exciting things is that of course we're taking the long view and also investing in full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. That will be beginning in 600 schools this September. We know that this is a challenging program to implement because we need to sort out new arrangements between the school systems and child care, so we will be implementing this over a number of years and working through some of the problems that various speakers have identified.

But one of the really exciting things we were able to do in the budget was to provide \$63.5 million in funding for the existing child care providers to backfill that money that is missing from the federal government and to make sure that we can retain those child care spaces that are there.

One of the things that is particularly exciting to me is that we were also able to provide funding for children's treatment centres. The children's treatment centres, as you know, work with children who have both physical and intellectual disabilities. We have a wonderful children's treatment centre that serves Wellington and Waterloo, and it just does wonderful work at KidsAbility. As their share, they will be receiving a \$630,000 increase, plus an additional \$70,000 in capital, and are quite delighted to be one of 12 children's treatment centres sharing in \$2.5 million for upgrading their IT, their information technology. They were just delighted to learn about that.

Because we know we have to support the vulnerable, we're also adding to the minimum wage, increasing that. It has just gone up to \$10.25 per hour. Social assistance has been mentioned. Adults who are on social assistance will be getting a 1% increase in social assistance.

I did mention that we need to manage responsibly. I think we should take just the few minutes remaining to look at that because we know this is a long-term project, climbing out of this deficit and getting back to balanced budgets. I want people to understand that one of the things the budget does is, it freezes our wages here in this Legislature for another two years. That's a total of three years. But it isn't just us because, quite frankly, freezing our wages is largely symbolic. The public likes to hear this, but it isn't a big piece of a multi-billion-dollar budget.

What does start to make a difference is that we will be freezing the non-bargained wages and benefits in the public sector. That includes the people who work for the Ontario Legislature directly for the Ontario government, our political staff but also in the broader public sector. So anybody who is not in a collective agreement will have their wages frozen for the next two years because we know that we operate at the behest of the Ontario taxpayer and so many of them are struggling.

We are respecting collective agreements. We looked at what happened with the last governments and saw that when you try and rip up collective agreements, it doesn't work. They didn't ultimately save any money. They just caused a lot of disruption to public services. We're not operating that way. We are respecting collective agree-

ments, but we have given notice that when those collective agreements come up for renegotiation, we are not budgeting for compensation increases for the first two years when they come up.

We've also had to do some things like phasing the Metrolinx projects, the transit projects here. I want to assure you that those projects will go ahead. They will just be phased a bit differently, but a matter of \$4 billion when you're dealing with a deficit of \$21.5 billion is not to be sneezed at. We need to look at some of these major projects and manage them better.

1520

However, I would like my constituents to know that the Georgetown South line is going ahead. While normally that's put in the context of getting the air-rail link to the airport, I would like my constituents to know that, to me, the Georgetown South line going ahead means that we will get good GO train service to Guelph sooner. All that construction going on in the Georgetown South corridor is what allows us to get trains past Mr. Chudleigh's riding or his neck of the woods and on out west to Guelph and Kitchener. Getting that service out west of here means we need to do that.

In fact, the Minister of Transportation was jointly announcing with the federal government, just this week, \$16.6 million for six bridges. Those are six bridges in Toronto that we need to make wider so we can get more trucks under to go to Guelph.

It's a good budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate hearing from the member for Guelph, who touched on a number of topics that are very key.

She talked about the children's centres. In our riding, there was a meeting last Friday with Ted Aldridge from the children's aid society. There are obviously huge concerns there with funding and programs, particularly the TAY program and a number of other programs, and what's going to happen with the \$4-million shortfall they're looking at, where they've been directed to get a line of credit in order to deal with their problems.

She also mentioned the GO expansion. We've got a considerable amount of expansion planned through Durham, Oshawa, Whitby and a number of those areas. I fully understand from what I am being told here, without being hands-on and knowing what's taking place in the ministry as to why it would or would not take place, that the expansion goes through a number of areas.

I wonder why the 407 doesn't appear to be moving forward. We have completion dates, supposedly, that are going to be in place. However, one aspect—and I'm not sure if the member is familiar with it—would be that in previous governments, the debt from the 407 was never added to the provincial debt. In other words, the expansion of the 407 should be allowed to continue on. According to, as I recall, the Auditor General's statements—because it's a toll road and would eventually pay for itself one way or another—it would not be added to



the provincial debt, and it would be one way to allow for infrastructure and development of various transportation modes.

As I said, the GO Transit is very difficult to move forward with.

The last aspect that I want to talk about is the northern development and mines ministry and northern Ontario. When we were in Sioux Lookout and spoke about the Far North Act there, when members presenting before the committee stand up and say they're willing to go to war over the legislation that was being brought forward in the Far North Act—as well as Grand Chief Stan Beaudy. I've worked with him on a number of occasions, trying to help curb youth suicide in a number of the First Nations communities in the Far North. When they stand and say that they will completely disregard it and it will not be applicable to them in legislation, to me it doesn't sound like there's a good working relationship that's moving forward in many aspects up there. I think a lot more work needs to be done.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's a pleasure to be able to speak to the comments made by the member from Guelph.

I want to speak first about the whole question of the Ring of Fire. My colleague here from the riding of Oshawa talked about the bad relations between the government of Ontario and First Nations in the north. Time and again, that reality has been echoed back to me by my colleagues who are from the north who deal directly with First Nations, who understand the history of ill will and lack of respect for, frankly, the rights and the needs of the First Nations.

There's no question that this government is pegging a lot of the future prosperity and well-being of this province on development of minerals in the Ring of Fire. If it hasn't come to a respectful government-to-government agreement with First Nations, I can say right now that the prospects for doing any development up there are going to be drastically reduced.

I also want to note that although the Ring of Fire development is being presented in this budget and debated in the budget as something that is going to have very near-term positive impacts on Ontario's economy, when I talk to my colleague from Timmins—James Bay, who seems to know a fair amount about mining and mining development, his read is that you won't actually see anything from this for a decade. So it is very splashy and it sounds pretty dramatic and one can talk about the manufacturing or extraction future, but the reality is, it really is in the future.

I want to say, as well, that it is critical in the development of anything to do with the Ring of Fire that the environmental values and needs of the north are respected in that development; any development up there has got to ensure that the north is left environmentally healthy.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** I'm pleased to add some comments in response to the honourable member from Guelph and her very astute and, I think, mature observations about the economy generally.

The simple truth is, we can't have it both ways. You, Madam Speaker, will perhaps appreciate better than most that nobody would have remembered the good Samaritan if he hadn't had money.

The reality is that we need to create a strong and a prosperous economy in order to significantly and meaningfully respond on all kinds of fronts—everything from the poverty agenda through to how to expedite those things which we know in our heart of hearts need to be completed on the transit front. But it isn't easy. I used to believe many, many years ago that money grew on trees. But I grew up; unlike Peter Pan, I grew up. I know that isn't the case anymore. I know we have to continue to work at it.

Coming out of the worst global economic crisis of the last 80 years—and rest assured, we are coming out of the worst global economic crisis of the last 80 years—for many of the reasons that the honourable member from Guelph has already articulated, we are taking prudent and responsible steps with respect to public sector spending. In fact, I don't know if members know this, but I've been doing a little bit of background research on this sunshine list that some people wail about here. Those on the sunshine list represent about 4.3% of the Ontario public service; the private sector—if you were to compare—it would be about 6.3%. So I think the member from Guelph has caught the spirit of where we need to go very well.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's always interesting to listen to the debate on the budget. Many times, we consider that the things that are announced in the budget are a fait accompli, but with this government, that is not always the case.

You will remember, in the budgets back in 2003 and 2004, when the government talked about the fact that they were going to have a lot of restraint in their spending habits—and of course, since that time, they have increased the provincial budget by over 65%. The economy of Ontario has increased less than one tenth of that amount. So those announcements don't always take place.

They also announced back then that they were going to reduce the reliance on consultants in this province. I think most people in Ontario know that over the last number of years the government has had a very close relationship with Courtyard; we have seen a \$1-billion eHealth scandal; we have seen a continuing scandal in the LHINs that is ongoing. Almost every day we uncover some other consultants who have gone on to LHINs. So the promises that are made in budgets don't always take place.

They talked about, in one budget, a red tape reduction promise. The CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Inde-



pendent Business, talk about the fact that red tape costs have risen to almost \$11 billion a year in Ontario. So that's another promise that didn't take place.

They promised to close coal plants, as you remember, that was in a speech from a throne, and they promised to do it in 2007. That promise went by the board; they didn't fulfill that promise. So they promised to do it in 2009, and, of course, that promise went by the board too. They didn't do it then. Now they have promised to do it in 2014—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Guelph has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you to the members for Halton, Oshawa, Toronto-Danforth and Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough and one more I didn't write down.  
1530

Just to comment on the comments of the member from Oshawa around the 407, it always amazes me that each year the Auditor General, in fact, does seem to slightly change the treatment of how things are accounted for in the budget. The Auditors General get together annually and seem to have an evolving conversation around how tax treatments work. Things do move. However, the main thing around the 407 may be that the accounting treatment would be different because, of course, we don't plan to sell the highway after we build it. That would lead to a difference in the accounting treatment.

In terms of the comments from the member from Toronto-Danforth around the Ring of Fire, I agree with him. It is quite a long-term picture before we are going to see investment up and running, and that is precisely for the reason that he cited at the beginning of his comments: Because we do know that we need to have extensive consultations with the First Nations and work out with the First Nations exactly how this is going to work. We realize that this is a long process, but if I can go back to my constituent, what he appreciated was our commitment to starting that long-term process and investing in it.

To my friend from Ancaster and all those other places, I'm always amazed when anybody can tie together the good Samaritan, Peter Pan and my remarks.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak this afternoon on second reading of Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts.

As you know, this is an important part of the legislative process—to have the opportunity to debate the government's first budget bill. As you'll recall, the provincial budget was read into the Legislature on March 25, about three and a half weeks ago, I guess. You'll recall that day, as I do, Madam Speaker. Many members of our caucus had the opportunity to go to the lock-up over at one of the government buildings across the way and have an opportunity to review the details of the budget, but of course we're sworn to secrecy until the budget is read. The fact is, when we were trying to leave

the budget lock-up at about 10 to 4 that afternoon, we were prohibited from leaving because there were OPP staff who told us that they had been told that they were not permitted to let us out of the lock-up until they heard from the minister's office. They were seeking permission from the minister's office to let us go.

We asked repeatedly to be allowed to leave the lock-up. In fact, we were not permitted to leave until about five minutes to 4. Again, we were over at the Macdonald Block, so you can imagine how some of us literally sprinted over here in order to get to the chamber. As we came in, the government members were snickering at us, laughing at us because we were coming in late.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Untrue, untrue.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** That is absolutely the truth. That's exactly what happened. It was very disappointing, and I would hope that there is further explanation brought forward to the opposition as to why that happened. My suspicion is someone in the minister's office probably thought it would be funny if we were kept over there till about 4 o'clock and then be late to come into the chamber. That's my belief as to what happened. But I certainly wanted to put that on the record again because there still has not been any satisfactory explanation from the government party as to why that happened.

Certainly, other members of the government side without question would have had the opportunity to sit in the lock-up. They were released before we were, obviously. Again, it happened three and a half weeks ago, but I wanted to put that on the record because I still think the government owes us an explanation, if not an apology.

The budget itself: Well, in response to the budget, our caucus obviously does not support the budgetary policy of the government. In response to the budget, the day of the budget I said that the budget shows that Premier McGuinty still has a major spending problem, and that has led to a staggering provincial debt that is going to lead to an unconscionable burden on future generations. I've said many times that every year that Mr. McGuinty adds to the debt, he's digging the hole deeper and deeper, which makes it harder and harder for us to get out. When the government says that the tough decisions don't have to be made now, that they can put it off, of course, people in Ontario understand that that just means it's going to make it more difficult when the decisions have to be made. Every year we put it off, the hole gets deeper and deeper.

Before the budget, the government leaked details of the deficit and patted themselves on the back with the news that the deficit this coming year was going to be only \$21.3 billion, they said. Again, "only" was their word, suggesting that that was good news because it was slightly lower than what had been previously anticipated, something like a \$25-billion deficit. I said at the time it appeared that the government was playing games with the numbers.

As we know, the \$21.3-billion deficit that they have acknowledged for this year is still the largest deficit in Ontario history. It also means that we're going to be



borrowing more than \$2 million an hour, every hour of every day, 365 days a year. Overall spending continues to go up even as taxpayers' ability to pay continues to go down.

By the government's own projections, the provincial debt will double by 2013. So over the course of the McGuinty government experience, the debt will double by 2013. I made the observation that it appears the government is putting off all the tough decisions until after the next election, which, of course, is scheduled for October 2011. They're leaving it to the next government.

There was no real jobs plan in the budget, nothing that would give anyone who is out of work or considers themselves underemployed any reason to hope for a better future. I have had a significant number of constituents coming to me in recent weeks and months who have been looking for jobs for many months at a time. We desperately need new, good and well-paying jobs. We need sustainable private sector job growth. As I said, I would submit that this budget does not include a plan which will address this particular part of the economic equation.

As you know, Madam Speaker, our caucus has also objected to the government's plan to extend lucrative severance payments to the tax collectors in the Ministry of Revenue who won't miss a day of work. As we know, under the McGuinty government's HST plan, provincial Ministry of Revenue staff will receive payments of up to \$45,000, up to six months' severance, simply for the inconvenience of transferring from the Ministry of Revenue to the Canada Revenue Agency. They won't miss a single day's work. I don't know how the government can explain this. So far, we have not had an explanation that makes any sense whatsoever. People in my riding are providing me with a lot of feedback on this issue. I raised this issue, as you know, Madam Speaker, in the House on March 11, when it came to our attention.

I want to touch briefly upon one of the issues that I'm hearing about in my riding. I know that the government members, I'm sure, are hearing the same thing. I'm pleased that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is in this House at the present time. I'm receiving a great deal of communication from my constituents who are concerned about this government's policy with respect to pharmacy. It is clear that the McGuinty Liberals have declared war on Ontario's pharmacists, and I believe that small-town residents may very well be caught in the crossfire. I would suggest that the Minister of Health needs to withdraw her proposals to cut pharmacy service. I would suggest that she should tone down her rhetoric and sit down with the pharmacists' association to seek common ground. I would suggest that if she doesn't do this, many of our independent pharmacies will not survive, and our small towns will be the losers.

Bill 16 includes amendments to the Drug Interchangeability and Dispensing Fee Act, which are, I guess, required by the government to undertake this war on pharmacy. We would suggest that they withdraw those proposals. I realize that the Minister of Health maintains

that the changes are needed to control the cost of drugs, but I would submit and suggest she has ignored constructive proposals that the pharmacists' association has presented to the government in recent months. We also know that Ontarians have now paid \$15 billion in the health tax that Premier McGuinty promised he wouldn't levy, and people seem to understand that we're paying more and more and receiving less and less.

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I think it's also important to point out that the Auditor General criticized the McGuinty Liberal government's eHealth program, which was intended to create computerized patient records. It cost something like \$1 billion yet delivered very little in the way of results, and we see that they're wasting hundreds of millions of dollars on one hand and clawing it out of pharmacy with the other.

Another issue that has been brought to my attention in my constituency that I want to bring to the attention of the House this afternoon is the issue of wind farms. As you know, the government passed the Green Energy Act just over a year ago, which sets a framework upon which companies can put proposals before the Ontario Power Authority and the Ministry of the Environment for consideration for wind farms to create wind energy generation. I would suggest that we need to put these wind farm projects on hold pending the completion of a study which would document their health effects. I would suggest that before we build massive new wind farms, we need to know they're safe. I believe that my constituents are behind me with that contention, based on the response and the feedback I'm receiving from my riding.

I introduced a resolution in the Legislature on March 25, and I called for this comprehensive and credible study which would fully document the full health impacts of wind turbines before any new wind farm proposals could proceed. I know that my colleague the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Bill Murdoch, introduced a similar motion last fall, but it seems that every single Liberal member present at the time of that vote voted against it. It would appear that they were whipped to vote against it. Still, I believe that increasing interest and concern over the issue merits further consideration of the points that Mr. Murdoch raised, and that's why my resolution has been brought to the floor of the House.

Many municipalities across the province have passed resolutions consistent with my resolution. I would make specific reference to the county of Wellington, the township of Centre Wellington as well as Mapleton township, which, of course, I used to be privileged to represent but is now in the riding of Perth-Wellington. I would suggest that our local councils deserve credit for taking a strong stand. I would just like to warn the government that there is going to be more to come on that issue as we move forward because we believe that the government is currently not listening.

I'm privileged to serve as our party's tourism critic. I had a chance to raise some tourism issues in the Legislature last week. I'm pleased that the Minister of Tourism is in the House today because he would, I'm



sure, want to know that his ministry website shows that the number of tourists visiting the province of Ontario continues to decline. If you look at the international border crossings for the most recent statistics available, for January 2010, it shows total inbound crossings from the United States down 12% and from overseas down 13.6%. If you look at the employment in tourism-related industries, it's down by 1%. If you look at hotel occupancy in Ontario, it's down 4.4%. The hotel average daily rate is down 5.9%. Again, this is percentage change, year over year. These numbers are down considerably even from last year's numbers, which were down considerably from the previous year's. It shows that our tourism industry continues to be in a dire situation with diminished numbers, and we don't see a clear plan on the part of this government to turn those numbers around.

We know that our attractions and our various tourism-related industries have a lot to offer. There's considerable untapped potential in our tourism businesses in terms of the numbers of people who should be coming, and we just need the right kind of leadership from this government in order to turn those numbers around. I believe that we could, but I was disappointed to hear the Minister of Tourism, in his response to my question, suggest that the HST is going to be a good thing for tourism. I know that people on our side of the House were startled to hear that statement, and the feedback I'm receiving from the industry is consistent with that as well.

A few weeks ago, I sent out a newsletter to my constituents, and included in my newsletter was a survey. I asked people to fill out the survey. These are the some of the responses I've received; actually, a small sample of what I've received. My commitment to my constituents was that I would read each and every reply. As I've been going through them, I think many of them have included advice and suggestions that are worthy of consideration in this House. I'd like to go through and just read a few of them, if I could, in the time I have remaining.

This one is from Rockwood, Ontario: "As senior citizens who have seen our retirement savings rapidly diminish in this economy, we will be facing great financial difficulty with the implementation of the 'HST.' Heating, hydro, transportation and other necessary costs will rise with this tax, while our incomes do not. 'Tax grants' will do nothing to help those who pay little or no income tax, but our living expenses still rise."

This response is from Georgetown: "The HST coming up is very concerning. Financially, times are tough for me and my family, and we cannot afford to pay out more money for tax. In anticipation of the hit coming, my wife has recently abandoned the role of 'stay-at-home mother,' and had to go back to work."

Here's one from RR4, Fergus: "Hello, Ted. You are right about this new sales tax. This not only will hurt the customers; this also affects the retailers, suppliers and

manufacturers. Lower purchasing and sales loss is not going to help our economy."

Here's another one about the HST. In fact, I would have to say that the vast majority of the responses make reference to the HST, and the vast majority, of course, are opposed. This response came from Georgetown: "How can the government push a tax like the HST without consulting the public? Same question for smart meters. These two tax grabs at the same time will bankrupt a lot of families."

Here's a response from Rockwood, Ontario, that I thought was short and very compelling—the voice of rural Ontario, really: "It is very hard to understand that governments can have so little respect for their food supply." That says a lot.

Here's a response from Erin: "Education—'graduates' from secondary cannot read or write. Low-income seniors, single parents are stretched now making ends meet—HST will only make it worse."

I have a response here from Elora, and it is very interesting. It says, "Bob Rae was a pussycat next to Dalton! The mismanagement and"—I can't say the next word because it's unparliamentary—"are shameful and disgusting!" This is the voice of people from Wellington-Halton Hills.

Here's another one, from Hillsburgh, Ontario:

"Greenbelt: If farmers will not be compensated for the loss in their equity when they retire, then who is going to continue to farm in the greenbelt? Since wind turbines and aggregate extraction are not prohibited, those farmers I referred to above will automatically be 'forced' to sell their farms to these businesses. This approach pleases the city slickers and their McGuinty cronies!

"Transportation: The construction of a railroad from Pearson to Toronto has been delayed again. This gives the opposition parties a second chance to demand an electric train instead of American diesels. On a recent trip to France, Germany and Switzerland, I saw nothing else [other] than electrics—most of them made by our own Bombardier company! No—of course—we must not accept continental thinking—only outdated American." Interesting comments.

Here's another one about the HST from Rockwood: "We are going to find it hard with our bills with the extra tax. Will the farmers get any of this HST back? It really is a money grab on us hard-working folks."

Here's another comment from Georgetown that I thought was especially compelling: "It's difficult to plan for the future for myself and my children without a job and an unstable economy."

"I'm already finding it difficult to survive day-to-day expenses. I'm worried the HST will make things even worse."

Here's another comment from Erin: "As a senior on pensions, I'm finding it difficult to live in Erin township. I own my own home (mortgage-free). Extremely high property taxes, lack of enough doctors, poor ambulance service, garbage fees, drive to Bellwood with large items—all this has me thinking [that I'll have to] move."



Another comment from the township of Huron, this one in Hillsburgh: "Canadian/Ontario governments just became an albatross of mismanagement, abuse of public money, education/training 40 years out of date. Social programs should be a stopgap, not a two- or three-generation way of life. Our public transportation is 30 years out of date and behind the times. Our road and water and sewers are a disgrace." This is a plea for improved infrastructure spending, which I found very interesting.

1550

Here's another comment from Elora. I asked the three questions as well in this survey. I asked, "What is Ontario's biggest challenge?" I listed some of them, and the response went this way. "These boxed items should be considered one challenge since each one affects the other. With government buildings underutilized or not being used at all, spending on maintenance etc., is foolish and wasteful. Expense accounts and ad budgets are grossly overfunded. Photo opportunities are too often ego trips at taxpayers' expense. Government is to be for the people, not just for some people. Research funding should have a realistic outcome that would benefit all."

Here's another response from Georgetown. I had a very heavy response from Georgetown, actually. "People are still losing jobs, companies keep closing. The retraining help the government is offering is laughable. All the jobs are going to Third World countries for a bigger profit margin. Yet prices and taxes keep going up. The working few out here need help."

I'm running out of time, but I'm glad to have had this chance to speak on behalf of my constituents from Wellington-Halton Hills this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I have listened to some of the comments from my colleague in the Conservative Party, and let me say that I share his concerns as expressed by some of his constituents regarding the HST.

The reality is, certainly in my part of Ontario, many people have incomes now that are significantly less than they were four or five years ago. Some of this has come from the loss of jobs in the forest sector. Some of it has come from the loss of jobs in supporting sectors of the economy. Some of this has come, frankly, from other cutbacks that have affected people. But the reality is, a substantial number of people have significantly less money, significantly less disposable income now than they had three or four years ago, and yet the McGuinty Liberals want to introduce a tax which will be a tax on just about everything.

If a loved one dies in your family, and you want to provide them with a funeral and you're told the funeral will cost \$10,000, well, with the implementation of the HST, \$10,000 will become \$11,300. Taxes on a taxi ride—if you have to purchase a bus ticket to go somewhere, that will be taxed. If you want to put your kids into soccer or hockey, that will be taxed.

I just do not understand how the government thinks this formula can be made to work. People have less money now than they had three or four years ago, yet this government is going to demand that people pay substantially higher taxes on just about everything. It seems to me that this is a recipe for hardship for all kinds of people.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to respond to the 20 minutes of speaking from the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. He touched on a couple of points that I'd like to make reference to, the first being the HST. He didn't speak long on it or say a whole lot about it, but he did make reference to it. I'm not sure anyone could speak on this without making mention of the fact that there are a lot of people in the province of Ontario and a lot of people nationally in Canada who are very surprised by the message that the provincial Conservatives pretend to try and convey in terms of their opposition to the introduction of the HST.

Of course, everyone knows that their federal cousins, the federal Conservative government, very much support the introduction of the HST. Most people who have been paying attention to this issue completely understand that up to very recently, most, if not all, of the provincial members of the Conservative opposition supported the HST.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** That's not right, and you know it.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Well, I think it was. I think it is right.

The other point that he raised in his speech that I'd like to mention is reference he made to the pharmacy issue and the debate that's going on in Ontario right now between our government and pharmacies in the province of Ontario.

I'm not sure, exactly—he just referenced it. He didn't say what his position was, particularly on what it is we're trying to do. Of course, what we are trying to accomplish, currently, with this issue is to lower the cost of generic drug prices in the province of Ontario for seniors who can ill afford it and, at the same time, try and find some tax savings for the government of Ontario so that those cost savings can be reinvested into getting more drugs on the formulary and to lower the cost of the generics that are out there that people who do not have them paid for who have to pay out of pocket themselves currently have to pay for. That's the point of what we're trying to do right now.

The debate continues, and we're hoping that in not too long a distance, we'll be able to have some good news on that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Mr. Arnott is a tremendous constituency politician. I've been up in his area on a number of occasions. The people know him, they



trust him, and he talks with many of them in an informal way as well as in a formal way at his constituency office.

One of the things that he has been running into, and I've been running into in the area I represent, in eastern Ontario, is this HST that's coming on. The area which is most irritating to people is that they're going to have to pay 8% more on their gasoline purchases. In Ted's area and in my area, people don't have the option, in part of those areas, of public transportation, so they have to use their cars to get to and from work, to and from their recreation, to and from their grocery shops.

What really drives them crazy is that they're not only going to pay 8% on the purchase price of the gasoline from the oil company, but also they're going to pay 8% on a tax which they've already paid to the provincial government. That is, 14 cents on every litre is already charged by the provincial government. What is this government going to do? They're going to charge 8% on the 14% as well as the cost of the actual gasoline.

I urged the government to drop the price of their 14-cent-per-litre charge on each litre of gasoline by 8 cents so that we'll have approximate parity with regard to the HST and the increase of 8% that we will see on July 1. Drop your other tax by 8 cents so it'll be all even, and the consumer at the gas pump won't be paying a \$1.10 per litre but will be paying \$1, which is the approximate price now.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the honourable member opposite; he's the critic for tourism and culture.

During his speech, he mentioned tourism, and I'd like to respond to a few points that he has mentioned. I appreciate the fact that he mentioned tourism. Last year, it had been down; quite a number of factors were down. As you can imagine, last year was a very, very difficult year. Also, compounded with the passport issue, the cross-border issue and the high dollar, as you can imagine, international or US visits to this province were quite challenging.

But I want to point out to the honourable member that in terms of mixing up all these numbers, 80% of tourists are domestic, about 13% of visitors come from the US, 2% are international visitors, and about 4% to 5% are from other provinces. You can see that 80% domestic is very important. That's why we've got to create jobs in Ontario: so that people who are unemployed can get back to work, get their job back so that they can generate disposable income; so that they can have the money to enjoy life and be a tourist across this province. This is very important.

The HST, by reducing business taxes, is greatly helping the economy, because when business taxes are low we're able to sustain and create jobs. That's how we're able to create jobs for people who are not working and get them back into jobs.

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Wellington-Halton Hills has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to thank the members for Kenora-Rainy River and Carleton-Mississippi Mills for their comments and acknowledge the comments, as well, from the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan and the Minister of Tourism.

Let's look at the budget again, because this is the budget bill that we're talking about. If you look at the budget papers document on page 48, you see the government's so-called plan to eliminate the deficit—and I'm glad the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance is in the House again today to hear my concern about this. The government would have led us to believe on budget day that, over an eight-year period, they were going to be able to balance the budget, but of course there are some key assumptions outlined on page 48 that, quite frankly, would lead you to believe that the government's plan to eliminate the deficit and balance the budget is bogus.

They say that they will have to hold the growth of program spending at 1.9% beyond 2012-13. Of course, this is after the election in 2011. I would again raise the rhetorical question as to when the government, if ever, kept program spending below 2%. Of course, the answer is that they have not. They have never come close to holding program expense increases to below 2%. I would submit that they have no real plan to do so. It would require spending cuts on a scale that we have not seen for many, many years. I would question very much whether or not this government has the stomach to do what would be required to hold program spending to below 2% per year.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** It's your plan, I say to the Minister of Agriculture. That's what you say you're going to do, hold program spending to less than 1.9% a year.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Fire teachers?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Minister of Education.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Now you're suggesting that that would require firing and laying off teachers, you're saying, and firing nurses. That's your plan. I guess you're saying that's your plan.

But let's hear an explanation from the government side. There's lots of time over the course of this afternoon to hear how they're going to do this.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to take a step back from the immediate and focus a bit on what has happened over the last few years and what the cumulative effect of these tax changes will be.

I still remember the video of one Dalton McGuinty looking into the television camera and saying, "I will not raise your taxes." I remember it was only seven months after that that something called the "health tax" was



implemented by the McGuinty Liberal government. Now, it is called a "health tax," but even that is a bit of subterfuge, because it has nothing to do with health; it is simply a tax. But the way you try to make people swallow it is you try to convince them that it has something to do with health or health care. In fact, it's simply money that is taxed from people that is put into the consolidated revenue fund. It has no direct or indirect tie to health care whatsoever. It's just a subtle way of trying to say that this tax is not a tax.

The government implemented that. I was one who said, over and over again, "The government will have to raise taxes." I was not the person who looked into the camera and said, "I will not raise your taxes." It's inevitable. But the issue I had with that and the issue I have with the HST is that if you look at the so-called health tax, it was overwhelmingly a tax on modest- and middle-income people. Someone with an income of, say, \$300,000 a year or more would have about a 1% increase in their income taxes, but somebody struggling to live on \$30,000 a year would in fact have a 25% increase in their provincial income taxes payable. People, families—and I know lots of them who struggle on \$40,000, \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year—would see similar, very large percentage increases in their taxes payable.

If you sit back and look at the so-called health tax implemented by the McGuinty Liberals, it was a tax that goes light on those who are very well off and goes very heavy on families with modest and middle incomes. I said at the time and I say it again: This is not fair, particularly when you see what's happening in our society—and this is well documented now. Middle- and modest-income families are not seeing an increase in their incomes. They're struggling to maintain their incomes and in many cases they're actually losing income, and yet that was a tax that went after them hardest of all. We also know that at the top end you have people who are accumulating great wealth, and yet there was a relatively small percentage increase in their taxes payable. That's what was done with the so-called health tax—overwhelmingly a tax on modest and middle-income families.

Now, a few years later, after saying that the HST was a regressive tax, something that Liberals in Ontario would never consider and was absolutely outside the bounds—I think I could give chapter and verse from the Premier and many of his cabinet ministers saying how bad the HST was—now, all of a sudden, this is a government that says that the HST is a wonderful thing. I look again at who is going to pay most of the burden of the HST. The government says, "It's only a combination of the GST and the PST." In fact, it's a huge broadening of the PST. The old provincial sales tax is going to apply to a whole range of things that were never taxed in the past. So it is going to be a substantial increase in taxes.

For somebody who has an income of \$200,000 or \$300,000 a year, a broadening of that tax base is not going to hurt them at all. It's not going to matter to them that the cost of a funeral for burying a loved one goes

from a \$10,000 base cost to \$11,300 with the HST; that's not a big concern for them. It's not a big concern for them that what is a \$200 retail hydro bill now becomes a \$226-a-month hydro bill with the HST. It's not going to matter to them that a \$50 or \$100 taxi ride is going to become a \$113 taxi ride. Those are annoyances at worst for somebody who has a high income. But let me tell you that seniors in my constituency who don't have a vehicle—if they want to go to the Loblaw or the Safeway or the grocery store, they have to take a taxi. If the taxi bill is \$50 and now with the HST it's \$56.50, that hurts. If the hydro bill goes from \$200 a month to \$226 a month—figure it out; that's \$300 a year added on—that hurts. They don't have the money. If their physician says, "You need to buy vitamins," and they go to the drugstore and they purchase \$50 worth of vitamins and it's now \$56.50 with the HST, that hurts. They don't have the money.

What worries me and what is very identifiable about this government is that when it says taxes must increase, what it overwhelmingly means is that taxes on middle- and modest-income families are going to be increased, not taxes on the well-off, not taxes on corporations—in fact, the government boasts that it's going cut the taxes of Bay Street corporations. The banks and insurance companies and major corporations in Ontario will get a tax reduction at the same time that modest- and middle-income families, many of whom have less free income now than they've ever had before over the last 20 years, are going to be paying substantially more.

1610

I see the government's ads in the newspapers and I hear them on the radio, that this is somehow going to be wonderful, but no one has yet been able to explain to me, and I don't think you can explain to any reasonable person, how they can have less income than they had before, now be asked to pay more taxes than ever before, and they're going to come out ahead. I don't care how many times the government runs the ads or how nice the voices sound on the radio, I don't think you can convince people who know that their income is less now than it was four or five years ago, who are going to be paying more taxes now than they were four or five years ago—I don't think you can convince anyone that they're going to come out of this better off. They're not, and people understand it.

They understand that if they want their kids to play soccer, if they want their kids to play hockey, and the fees for field use or for the hockey rink are \$1,000, that now becomes \$1,130; they understand that every time they need to take a taxi, they've got to pay 13% more; they understand that if they simply want to go have a will made, the lawyer will say, "Well, the cost of the will is \$500, but you have to add in the cost of the HST." And if my math is correct, I think that quickly becomes \$565 for the cost of a will when you add in the HST.

People understand, because people can do their own math, that this does not lead to them being better off. What it leads to is people, in fact, having less disposable



income at the end of the month, less to pay for the necessities of life. Which brings me to the other part of this issue. The government in northern Ontario tries to boast about this. They're saying, "Oh, we're going to provide an effective energy tax credit." All the average person has to do is simply add up their hydro bill. If your hydro bill is \$200 a month—and that's not an unusual hydro bill now; I know lots of people whose hydro bill is much higher than that because, after all, they have to pay the cost of all those inflated salaries at the Ontario Power Authority, and increasingly the inflated salaries at Hydro One, at Ontario Power Generation, at the electricity financing body and at the Independent Electricity System Operator—huge, burgeoning bureaucracies under this government—but people who have a \$200 hydro bill now understand that it will be \$226 a month. Just do the math: \$26 a month times 10 is \$260; add in another \$26 and another \$26, and you're over \$300 a year just in taxes.

The government's so-called energy credit won't even cover the increase in the hydro bill that comes from the HST, but then add in heating costs. If you've got an averaged-out heating bill that, let's say, comes to \$200 a month, with HST it's now \$226 a month; 10 months, \$260; 12 months, over \$300. Even with this government's so-called energy credit for residents of northern Ontario, people end up paying more.

These are not things you can do without. It's not like saying to people, "Well, don't buy the new car." It's not like saying to people, "Well, don't buy jewellery." It's not like saying to people, "Well, don't buy the new suit." These are things that people need. If you want to be able to rely upon the health and wholesomeness of the food in your refrigerator or your freezer, you need to be able to pay the hydro bill. It's not a good idea eating food that comes out of the freezer if the hydro has been shut off for three or four days.

If you expect people to survive in winters where it's not unusual that it gets to 20 below, 30 below or even colder some nights, heat—being able to pay the natural gas bill or the heating oil bill—is not a luxury. These are necessities. People have to be able to do this. But I know and I know other members of this Legislature know that there are all kinds of people now who are challenged trying to pay the heating bill and the hydro bill every month. They're challenged now. What happens when you tack on another 13%? What happens when you hit them with the HST on top of these costs?

I think this government owes people an explanation of that. People who already, at the end of the month, run out of food because it costs so much to pay the hydro bill, the heating bill and the rent—what are they supposed to do now with the HST? What are they supposed to do? How are they supposed to survive with this kind of tax increase on modest- and middle-income families?

I suppose this government thinks that if they run another slick ad campaign and get another nice voice on the radio, they can avoid these questions. These questions are not avoidable. They're cropping up in community

after community now. People simply do not know how they are going to make ends meet. I don't know what strategy, I don't know what tactic this government has in mind to try to dodge these questions, but these questions are coming. They're going to be very painful in community after community across the province—which brings me again to another issue that is, again, part of this government's budget policy.

With much fanfare, this government has announced that it's taking on the big drug manufacturers—well, that's what the political spin, the media spin is. In fact, they're not taking on the big drug manufacturers; the people they're taking on are Ontario's pharmacists. I'm hearing from them now every day. I hear from the young woman who owns the pharmacy in the town of Rainy River. She has a number of people who she works for. Some are First Nations people who do not have a car. They have no way of travelling the 70 kilometres to the next town to access the drugstore—except that drugstore in that town won't survive either, because it's a small, independent drugstore. They don't have a vehicle so that they can travel 90 kilometres to Fort Frances to access a drugstore.

But the young woman in Rainy River is very clear. She said, "Look, this isn't going to do anything to the big drug manufacturers, but it is going to put my drugstore out of business. The government's going to take this amount of money from me, and yes, they're going to increase the prescription fee by a little bit, but in fact, I'm going to lose a lot of money over here. I'm going to get a little bit of money on this side, but I'm out of business."

Then you go to Emo, the next little town that has a community drugstore. The drugstore owner there, the pharmacist-owner, says the same thing: "I'm out of business." I talk with the people who offer pharmacy services to many of the northern First Nations. That is very extensive pharmacy education work. I'm already receiving emails from them. They're saying, "Look, I'm out of business. I don't know how this is going to create a better Ontario. The 6,000 or 7,000 people who rely on my drugstore, what do they do? Do they call up the Shoppers Drug Mart in Thunder Bay?" Good luck getting the sort of public education and public service from them.

Maybe this government thinks it can avoid this debate simply by focusing on political spin with the editorial board of the *Globe and Mail* or the editorial board of the *Toronto Star*, but I have to tell you, out there in Ontario, in the small towns, the rural towns, where there is no Shoppers Drug Mart—by the way, it's the Shoppers Drug Marts that are going to win in this battle. After you put all the little guys out of business, Shoppers Drug Mart will have greater industry concentration, greater control of the market, than ever before. They'll have a near-monopoly situation.

1620

But what is going to happen in all of those small towns, all of those rural villages, those First Nations communities, where it is the community pharmacy, or the



one or two pharmacies in town, that provide service to people? I suppose the Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star don't care about that; these people are located more than 70 kilometres from the heart of downtown Toronto, therefore they don't matter. But let me tell you, these are real people and many of them have very serious health conditions, and right now those health conditions are being treated, in many cases, by prescription drug remedies provided by their local pharmacy. It's the local pharmacies who are saying, "We're going to be out of business. There is no way you can take this amount of money from my drugstore, substitute the small amount that this government is offering, and still expect to us stay in business. We'll be gone. We'll be out of here."

Again, the government seems to think that it can slide by this debate just by holding more editorial boards with the Toronto Star and the Toronto Globe and Mail, but I don't think that's going to work.

I simply ask the question: What are seniors in Rainy River supposed to do? Drive 100 kilometres to Fort Frances to get their prescription drug needs filled? What are people who live on a First Nation who don't have a car and don't have bus service supposed to do? Take a taxi 100 kilometres one way to have their needs addressed? What are people who live in small towns and rural areas, where it is the small-town pharmacy that is very much at risk as a result of what this government is doing, supposed to do? I ask that question, in all sincerity, of the Minister of Health.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to respond to the speech by the member from Kenora-Rainy River, especially on the last part of his speech dealing with small and rural pharmacies. He raises a very valid point, and it's one that I've been happy to have an opportunity to talk about in my constituency office, as well as with the minister.

I think the member is probably aware that the minister has been very public in her acknowledgement and hope for accommodation in terms of small, rural and independent pharmacies in the province of Ontario. We certainly haven't promised anything, and we don't know where this is going to land as of yet, but I think it's fair to say that we are all aware, as members of the Legislative Assembly, of the key role that small, rural, independent pharmacies play in the province of Ontario. None of us wants to be in the position of limiting that service.

I've got a small rural fellow operating in the community of Atikokan. I've had numerous conversations with him. I'm fully aware of his value and the role that he plays in that community. Clearly, we're not interested in seeing him go out of business so that people have to travel two hours west to Fort Frances or two hours east to Thunder Bay to have their scripts filled. Clearly, that's not at all what we're trying to do.

The other part of the speech focused on the HST. I should start by saying that those in the opposition have at least been consistent in terms of their opposition to the HST. They also have been consistent in not portraying

the other half of the story that comes along with the HST, and that's the significant permanent tax reductions that have been put in place, some of which already began fully six months ago, on January 1. The northern energy credit that the member minimizes in his remarks is significant: up to \$130 for a single, up to \$200 for families, in addition to the personal income tax reductions and the other sales tax credits and grants. It provides significant relief for people when it comes to the imposition of the HST, so we're very proud of that.

I will, of course, as a northern member, be paying very close attention to see who is going to support our budget that contains, of course, the northern energy credit for all people in northern Ontario only.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I'm pleased to comment on the speech of the member from Kenora-Rainy River, especially regarding the hydro rate issue.

There was something that was brought up that I'm surprised hasn't been discussed a lot more in the Legislature, regarding the announcement Friday, April 9, where the provincial government allowed the 11.6% increase to move forward because of what was listed as "needed to maintain the equipment and expand the current systems within the province of Ontario," expecting a little over 8% on May 1, the additional charge in hydro rates, and the additional remaining of the 11.6% to go up on January 1, 2011.

If you look at the impact of HST on July 1 with the additional 8% there, plus the 11.6% and then the green fee that we're looking at, as well as what's going to happen or we expect to happen next year as time-of-day metering, it's going to have a huge impact. I'm speaking to individuals on a regular basis—as a matter of fact, Ned from Apsley, who's quite frankly selling his house. He's moving to Brighton. Certainly the number one aspect that he spoke about—although he didn't say it, but when he spoke about the cost—was the energy cost. He just couldn't afford to live there anymore. It was one of the key aspects of the decision-making process why he decided to move out of there.

You talk about \$10 a month for the northern hydro tax credit. I don't necessarily believe that's going to even equate to the amount of additional charges that are going to be out there.

As well, we had the new time-of-day metering, or however we want to call it, installed in the house. The person installing that went on to explain that, "This time next year, you can expect to be paying double what you are," and that's the people installing it in our house, not knowing who I was. They ended up dealing with my wife at the time when they were discussing this entire impact.

I think it's going to have huge impact, particularly on seniors. They're the individuals who are home through the day, who are using the washing machines, dishwashers and other aspects. It will have a big impact.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?



**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I want to pick up in part where the member from North Bay was speaking about, the other side of the story.

Remember that for about 87% or thereabouts of the monies we expend on disposable income for purchase of goods and services, we already pay both the PST and the GST. So the HST won't make any difference in that regard. Only a small percentage of services will now be attracting, on an overall percentage basis, the additional portion of the PST that's not currently there, and that'll be 8%, not 13%. The member consistently referred to this 13% tax increase, which doesn't exist.

I want to go from there because the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan spoke about the other part of the story being tax reductions, growing the economy, which leads us to the need, quite frankly, to have opportunities for young people to be trained so they can meet the job demands of the new economy. It's why, as part of this budget, we're investing about \$310 million on an annual basis to ensure that some 20,000 new spaces in colleges and universities are available to our young people primarily.

We know that in the years to come and not too-distant future about 70% of our jobs are going to require post-secondary education or training, and we're not meeting that standard today. By adding these additional seats and opportunities for young people, some 20,000 more, we're going to be that much closer to ensuring that our workforce meets the capacities in training and skills in colleges and universities that are going to be demanded of the new economy that's being created in part by our capacity to restructure the tax system, which will take time to flow through, to make sure that we have the future jobs that are necessary in this province.

In addition to providing opportunities with 20,000 new spaces, we're moving to the next generation. We're moving to the online university in Ontario. We're going to provide opportunities for those who may be in remote areas who need specialized training to take opportunities that don't currently exist.

We talk about one little piece, but if we look at the entire budget and the objectives, we can see that it's to build this economy, provide jobs for young people—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I want to comment on the member from Kenora–Rainy River's comments. It's interesting; he started out and mentioned right off the bat "I will not raise your taxes," the Dalton McGuinty famous speech from 2003. Of course, he went right out later on and raised taxes. The health premium was a substantial tax increase after he promised he wouldn't raise them at all and actually signed the Taxpayer Protection Act.

Now, the government turns around in this budget and talks about the famous harmonized sales tax and all these people who are getting these huge tax breaks. Ask anyone how much their tax break has been on their paycheque. Ask how many people have actually had a

noticeable difference. They can't even tell you, because, do you know what? It's actually pennies. It works out to be pennies as compared to the harmonized sales tax which is coming in, which is like literally thousands of dollars a year per family. That's the difference. They're trying to hide behind this belated tax increase, because they've already given people six years of the health premium, which didn't really go into health care.

1630

If you want to talk a little bit about pharmacies—I don't know who is not hearing about pharmacies. I'm not hearing from Shoppers Drug Mart or Rexall in my riding; I'm hearing from the small pharmacies. I talked to a gentleman the other night who has a small pharmacy-grocery store. He has 19 employees. Do you know what? He's not going to have 19 employees as soon as this goes through. He'll be cut down to probably 12 or 13. What's going to happen? There are going to be seven or eight people whose jobs will be eliminated as a result of the changes that the government has made with the pharmacies.

I'm hearing it every day. I don't know if anyone else is hearing that. We now have literally a pile of letters and emails, probably thousands of them, and that's in a small rural community. I can tell you that people are mad about this.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Kenora–Rainy River has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I started out by posing a fairly specific question, and I'm interested that none of the Liberal members even tried to answer it.

The health tax was overwhelmingly a tax on modest- and middle-income people. It was modest- and middle-income people who saw their income taxes payable go up the most under the health tax, and it will be modest- and middle-income people who get hit hardest by the HST. Yet the reality is that we have a substantial number of modest- and middle-income people in Ontario whose incomes have actually dropped. Here you are: People's incomes have dropped, and the cumulative effect of the McGuinty Liberals is to tax those people more than ever.

I simply asked the question: How is that a recipe for people to be better off? And eureka, I didn't hear an answer. I heard some people trying to talk at angles—to triangulate—but I didn't hear an answer.

I asked a second question: How is it going to benefit people in Ontario to put the small independent pharmacies across this province out of business? The member from Thunder Bay, I'll give him credit, actually admitted that this is a problem. I wanted to see if he was going to mention Atikokan, because this is a very serious problem in the town of Atikokan. It's a very serious problem in dozens of communities across this province.

The people who are actually going to benefit in the long run from what the government is doing are the Shoppers Drug Marts. Shoppers Drug Mart will weather this storm because they're huge and they sell just as much in terms of perfume and groceries and other home



wares as they sell in terms of drugs. But what happens in the small communities where there's no Shoppers Drug Mart?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important issue; that is, to deal with our budget and the budget bill, Bill 16.

With your permission, Madam Speaker, I will be taking the full 20 minutes. In that period, I will be talking about some of the broader themes in the budget and what that means for my community in Ottawa Centre. But then, more specifically, I want to talk about schedule 2 of Bill 16, which is the result of Bill 194, a private member's bill that I tabled. I'm very proud and happy to see that an Act to amend the City of Ottawa Act is part of this budget bill, and I want to spend some time talking about it.

Let me talk about this very important budget, which has been tabled at a crossroads in our economy. When I say "our economy," I'm talking about the economy in Ontario and our economy in Canada, because we know that in order to have a stronger Canada, we need a strong Ontario and a stronger Ontario economy.

We have just lived through one of the most devastating global recessions in our lifetime; I think we can say that for all of us in this Legislature. One of the most significant recessions has now been referred to as the great recession, akin to the Great Depression in the 1930s, when we saw developed and developing economies around the globe being decimated and thousands of people losing their jobs. Of course, Ontario was not immune to that.

But as we are coming out of 2009 into 2010 and starting to recover from that devastating global recession, we need to make sure that we've got the right set of policies in place that not only will prolong and grow this recovery to make Ontario prosperous and economically healthy, but will also create jobs—jobs which are not just short-term, which we are also creating through the stimulus package, but jobs that are meaningful and that are long-term, because our families—Ontarians—deserve those types of policies. That's exactly what this budget is trying to do. It's trying to create jobs which are sustainable and which are long-term.

The government has done a few things that have been talked about: bringing a very comprehensive tax reform package forward; the harmonization of the GST and the PST to make our businesses more competitive, because they are the ones that create jobs in our economy; making sure we bring effective tax cuts, tax breaks for individual Ontarians, for families in Ontario to make sure that they have more money in their pockets and are able to generate wealth and are able to save money for their retirement; and also, reducing corporate taxes for our small businesses because they are the engine of our economy, both in large cities and small towns in this great province of ours.

But beyond that, we are also doing things like the Green Energy Act, which has resulted in a green revolution, a renaissance, in our province. We are already starting to see the kind of investment that is taking place in the province of Ontario because of the Green Energy Act. We are, in fact, now starting to create jobs in this province which are long-term and sustainable. We are moving away from our traditional manufacturing jobs to something more sophisticated, something more advanced, suited for the 21st century economy we live in. And Ontario has become a leader in that instance to the point where you've got various US states and the federal government in the United States looking at Ontario's Green Energy Act, to the point where you've got a foreign company like Samsung investing \$7 billion of foreign investors' money right here in the province of Ontario. These are the kinds of things we used to look at in other parts of the world and in the United States and say, "Why not us here in Ontario?" It's starting to happen right here in Ontario. So we should be very excited and glad about that, because these economic policies are starting to pay dividends. Not only are we creating good, green jobs, but we are also starting to live in a sustainable and responsible fashion, and we are looking after our environment, bringing our greenhouse gas emissions down in the province of Ontario.

Here are some other things in this budget which are very important in terms of preparing Ontario for the 21st century economy. An important issue that has always been important for me is investment in our post-secondary education. Through this budget and the throne speech before it, the government has outlined a very clear intention to ensure that more and more students in our universities and colleges are graduating. Right now, I think we have a graduation rate of about 62%; the government's intended purpose is to raise it to 70%. That is laudable. I don't think anybody can disagree with that, that we should increase our graduation rate to a higher level. We need to make sure that more Ontarians, young and old alike, are able to go to university and college and get the education they want and be productive members of our society. As a result, through this budget, we are creating 20,000 new spaces for students in our colleges and universities, and that's not just numbers. We are actually putting, through this budget, money behind it to make that happen: \$310 million is being invested through this budget to create those 20,000 new spaces.

Let me give you some perspective: I'm very blessed that in Ottawa Centre I have Carleton University, which I have the privilege of representing. The 20,000 new spaces is equivalent to another Carleton University, which is a very large university. They will get their fair share. We've got the University of Ottawa in the city. We've got La Cité collégiale, Algonquin College and other post-secondary institutions which will all benefit from these additional spaces.

We also continue to invest more money in the Second Career strategy program, creating 30,000 more spaces, training opportunities, for unemployed workers. I've had



quite a few of those unemployed workers in my riding who have been trying to get access to the Second Career strategy, and this will allow them the opportunity to do that. So that's one aspect.

1640

Number two, investments in child care: \$63.5 million per year of additional new money is being invested to ensure that we have child care. These are the dollars which the federal government used to give to the province—and they've now backed out, unfortunately. What did this government do? This government did not run away from that obligation, from those parents and those children. They said, "No, we are continuing to invest in our children." That's 302 child care spaces in my city of Ottawa. I've had parents and child care workers tell me, "Thank you. This is a very good investment."

Full-day learning is another very important aspect, where we're making sure that our four- and five-year-olds are getting the education needed to grow in this economy and to be a boost to our economy. In Ottawa, there are 39 schools which will be providing full-day learning in the first phase, and two of them are in my riding: W.E. Gowling school and Cambridge public school. Both of these schools are in low-income neighbourhoods in my community. I'm very excited to see that the full-day learning is going to those two communities in my riding of Ottawa Centre, because that's where you've got a lot of low-income parents, a lot of single mothers who are doing two jobs and raising their children. That's where we're making sure that those children have the resources and the tools to get the right sort of education and to develop and be a productive member of the community in Ottawa—not to mention that \$245 million over the next two years in terms of capital investment in our schools is a very important step.

Reducing poverty is another very important issue. As we know, as of March 31, the minimum wage increased to \$10.25, one of the highest in Canada—a significant increase in minimum wage since this government came into office in 2003.

We were talking about taxes earlier on. There are a lot of tax credits for low- to mid-income Ontarians and seniors with fixed income, as well, that are coming into place. Just like GST credits, as of July 1 there's going to be a new Ontario sales tax credit, which will be up to \$260 per adult and per child, which is very significant, based on your income. Not to mention, we've got property tax credits which are, I think, up to \$1,025 for seniors and up to \$900 for non-seniors—again, income-tested to make sure that those members of our community with low- to mid-income or seniors with fixed incomes are the ones who are benefiting from it.

Then, of course, there's the stimulus package, which is still creating jobs. I see all kinds of construction that is going on—Carleton University has two towers being built right now, and the provincial government invested \$25 million; there's Parkdale Market in my riding, where they're revamping this whole local farmers' market;

cleaning up the park—to make sure that we've got that community infrastructure in place for our community. There's a significant investment in the YMCA in my riding, the Metro Y, to make sure that families have an affordable place to get recreational services. I can go on and on. In Ottawa alone, we're talking about \$400 million in stimulus funding thus far, creating jobs, fixing public infrastructure and renewing community infrastructure—a very important step which is welcomed by all members of my community.

Next Thursday, I have the honour to be at the groundbreaking for the Ottawa Chinatown Gateway. We're actually building a gateway in Chinatown, which is in my riding, to—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you. I know Minister Chan has been a big supporter of the Chinese gateway, where we're partnering with the Chinese government. It is to mark the contribution of the Chinese community in Ottawa, for all their hard work over many years and what they've given to our city, and also to create another tourist hub in our great city, so that when tourists come into the city they know where to go. We actually have been successful in getting tourist designation signs for Little Italy and Chinatown on Highway 417 as well. So it's very exciting—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** You don't have a Little Italy in Ottawa.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Oh, we have a very exciting Little Italy in Ottawa, Mr. Colle. You should come and visit. We've got some great Italian restaurants in our Little Italy.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Name one. Name one.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Oh, I don't want to be biased. There are so many good ones. I go and visit all of them.

There are all these things to make sure that we, as a community, are growing, but also we are enhancing our economy.

At this point—I'm mindful of the time—I want to move on to another very important topic, which is close to the city of Ottawa, and that is schedule 2 of Bill 16, which is an amendment to the City of Ottawa Act of 1999. Essentially, schedule 2 creates an independent board of public health in the city of Ottawa. Up to now, today, through section 12 of the City of Ottawa Act, the city council is the board of public health. It's the city councillors who make all decisions as they relate to public health. I think a lot of members will agree with me that that could pose certain problems, because I personally don't think that politicians should be making decisions around public health. Those are science-based decisions, and they should be made by experts. That has been an issue for my community of Ottawa for some time.

I was honoured to bring in a private member's bill, Bill 194, which I tabled on June 3, 2009. This legislation asked that an independent board of public health be created. I am extremely grateful to the government that they adopted that bill and made it into a government bill,



through the budget, Bill 16. I'm very excited. My community is very happy about that.

Basically, I tabled Bill 194, pursuant to a city council motion of October 22, 2008, because the city council has been debating this issue for some time in Ottawa. Through a very in-depth analysis, they came up with certain recommendations. Just to give you a bit of an overview, those recommendations were:

- to create a board of health comprised of 11 members appointed by the city: six councillors and five citizen representatives;

- that the board of health appoint a medical officer of health and the associate officers of health, to be employees of the board of health;

- that the medical officer of health report directly to the board of health;

- that the city of Ottawa provide to the board public health unit employees, who shall remain city of Ottawa employees, so that the funding is coming from the city of Ottawa. By the way, 75% of it is uploaded by the province, so we've got good co-operation going there;

- that the board of health make recommendations to city council on any issues within city council's jurisdiction that involve health considerations—example: non-smoking bylaws; and

- that the board of health report annually to city council on its operations.

Essentially what I did through Bill 194 was take those elements of the city council motion of October 22, 2008, and incorporate them in the bill, to make sure that the bill represents the will and intent of our elected city council.

I briefly talked about why that is important. It's extremely important because, again, us politicians, of course, have certain expertise in public policy matters, but we're not experts in public health matters. That should stay within the purview of those experts. Those decisions should be made by those experts, not politicians, because sometimes—and I'm being generous—when we are looking at issues, we have partisan objectives, we have ideological reasons and we push for certain ideas. That's part and parcel of a democracy.

That may be good for public policy issues, but when it comes to public health issues, it could be very troubling, and we wanted to avoid that. We wanted to make sure that in our municipalities, those public health decisions—because we're dealing with the health of individuals; we're dealing with the health of our community; we're dealing with the health of our family members—are made by an independent board of public health.

It is good governance, it's a more efficient and effective way of governing, and it is the right thing to do. It removes politics from decisions which are extremely important and relate to our health.

1650

This type of change is no different than having a police services board, which all of our municipalities have, where you've got a board which is made up of members of the community and has the oversight capability and capacity. The same thing with community

housing: They have independent boards with city councillors sitting, and then you have some tenants' groups and you've got members of the community sitting around the table and looking after governance issues. The same model is applying here. The city of Toronto has a similar model. A lot of other regional municipalities have similar models. Ottawa was behind in time, and I'm very happy to see that it's moving forward. Through schedule 2 of Bill 16, we are making sure that Ottawa will have an independent board of public health.

I had the opportunity to be on the board of a community health centre, the Centretown Community Health Centre in my riding, where I learned about these issues in quite an intimate fashion, before I was elected. I was very happy to pursue this matter once elected. I just want to take the opportunity to read you some quotes about what people in the know locally think about this issue.

Dr. Isra Levy, who's the medical officer of health for the city of Ottawa, said, "The board of health provides oversight and leadership to the professional staff of the health department. It is critically important that it has the time and expertise to focus on public health matters. I want to commend the vision shown by provincial and municipal elected leaders in their commitment to improve the governance model."

Jack McCarthy, who is the executive director of the Somerset West Community Health Centre in my riding, said, "A board of health for Ottawa that will now include members with population health expertise is a big step in the right direction. I welcome this important change."

Simone Thibault, who is the executive director of the Centretown Community Health Centre, also in my riding, said, "I am pleased that this bill is supporting Ottawa city council's direction in establishing an independent board of health. The residents of Ottawa will certainly benefit from increased attention paid to this essential service."

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Diane Deans, who is the chairperson of the Community and Protective Services Committee, for moving this issue forward through city council—her leadership has to be acknowledged—and all city councillors who have worked on this matter.

I would be remiss if I did not thank my staff for helping me, working through this file when I initially tabled this. I want in particular to mention Jackie Choquette, who's my executive assistant, and Geoff Turner, who is with my office here in Toronto, who worked very hard on this matter moving forward. A big thanks also to Tara Partington, who is the legislative counsel who helped me draft this bill. Her counsel was very important. Big thanks to the ministers and offices of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for their guidance on this very important issue, because what essentially we are doing by passing schedule 2 of Bill 16 is helping to create a healthy Ottawa. We're making sure that those very important public health decisions which are made in the city of Ottawa are made in light of sound science and not



ideology. I'm very proud that this step is finding favour. Thus, I ask all the members to support Bill 16.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been six and a half hours of debate on second reading of Bill 16.

Government House leader.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Madam Speaker, we would like the debate to continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Pursuant to the government House leader's intervention, we will now go to questions and comments. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I am pleased to have a chance to respond briefly to the member for Ottawa Centre, who also serves as the president of the Liberal Party, I know, and, as such, you would anticipate and expect him to bring the presentation of the government this afternoon defending the party line, which he did very well.

But I have a question that I've raised on a number of occasions. I'm going to keep asking it, because I have to question the integrity of the government's balanced budget plan. I raised this this afternoon. I've raised it in a number of other contexts. But the fact is, the government claims to be planning to balance the budget over time, over an eight-year period. What we've seen in the budget papers seems to lack credibility. In fact, when I suggested that earlier this afternoon, the Minister of Education, while heckling me, said that in order to keep the budget increases at below 2% per year, that would require laying off nurses, laying off, I think she said, firefighters, and a number of public servants would have to be fired, she said. But the fact is, the government's plan is to contain and restrain spending to less than 2% a year. That's their plan, and that's what she seemed to be criticizing, although I don't think she was maybe listening to exactly what I was saying.

But I would ask the member for Ottawa Centre to explain to this House how the government plans to contain and restrain spending below 2% a year, which again is in your plan—it's in the budget papers document—after 2012, I believe, and it's only by restraining program spending to below 2% per year that you claim to be able to balance the budget in eight years' time.

I'd certainly be interested in hearing what your thoughts are on that matter. I haven't yet heard an explanation from the government as to how they're going to do this.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened, I must admit, to part of the member for Ottawa Centre's speech. Some parts of it were very much aimed at his constituency of Ottawa Centre. But I too want to ask a question of the government, and since he is also president of the Ontario Liberal Party, perhaps, next to the Premier, he's the person to answer this.

I read, the other day, an economist who has looked at the HST says that the HST in gross will take another \$7

billion out of the pockets of Ontario residents, and he makes the point that most of that money will come from modest- and middle-income families—I haven't heard anyone refute that \$7-billion estimate.

Now, of course there are going to be some tax reductions for corporations, and the government is going to mail out a few cheques for one year only—I think they hope to deflect attention from the tax increase. But I did want to ask: How does taking \$7 billion a year, primarily from modest- and middle-income families in Ontario, many of whom actually have lower incomes now than they had a few years ago because of the huge loss of jobs in manufacturing and elsewhere—how are those families going to be better off? When you take \$7 billion out of their pockets when their income is lower than ever, how is that going to leave them better off?

No one in the government has addressed this issue yet, so hopefully the president of the Liberal Party of Ontario can address it now.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes on this topic. Once again, there seems to be a bit of a theme evolving here where members are rising in their places and not responding to the speeches that have been made but posing questions. It seems like they're trying to change the channel a little bit in terms of what has been responded to. I'll have a turn at it as well, and I'll pose my own question back to some of the members.

There are those who have taken the opportunity, when speaking on the budget, to comment on the HST, of course, as I have said on a number of occasions here, only telling half the story, in my opinion, as has consistently been the case for over one year now. I guess I would ask the question: If it is people of modest and middle incomes who will be hardest hit by the imposition of the HST, then why is it that we do not hear a hue and cry from poverty groups across the province of Ontario, lining up or marching on the lawn of Queen's Park in opposition to the HST as it's going to arrive on July 1?

In fact, the opposite is true. We have seen a significant number of groups involved in the struggle against poverty in the province of Ontario who have very publicly supported the HST, because they have come to the conclusion that the HST is a good policy for those of modest and middle incomes. They have very much come to that conclusion.

I pose that question back, and perhaps the next time the member from Kenora—Rainy River speaks, he'll have an opportunity to answer that one as well.

I would add an additional question: Why is it that Ken Lewenza, the leader of the Canadian Auto Workers union in Ontario, wrote a letter to the leaders of the two opposition parties asking them to tone down their rhetoric when it comes to the HST. He was very direct. He thought the rhetoric had gone over the top. I remember his letter very clearly, especially asking members of the NDP to just tone it down a little bit.



**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Taking economic direction from the Canadian Auto Workers is really an exciting opportunity. I think that's something the Liberals and NDP may want to do, but I don't think the Conservatives are going to be looking in that direction. Although, under the Conservative government, the CAW added more workers to their union rolls than any other government. Ontario was expanding. There were a million new jobs in the province at that time, and union workers, I think, were very pleased to have those automotive jobs during the time of the Harris government. Those jobs, of course, have disappeared. Many of those jobs have disappeared under the current regime.

1700

I was talking earlier, in a two-minute question and comment period, about the promises that this government has made in the past and how many of those promises have somehow fallen by the wayside and not come to fruition. There was a promise in 2007 that they would hire 9,000 nurses. In fact, the reality of the situation was that over the next year or so, the nurses had been laid off.

They had talked about 35,000 new long-term-care beds, and it's very questionable as to how many beds have been announced or built by this government. I know we built 20,000 long-term-care beds in Ontario. Can you imagine what the situation in Ontario would have been, as bad as it is today, if we hadn't built those 20,000 beds? I know the government tried to take credit for the last beds under that program that were built, but there have been precious few new long-term-care beds built in the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Ottawa Centre has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank the honourable members from Wellington-Halton Hills, Kenora-Rainy River, Thunder Bay-Atikokan and Halton for their feedback on what I was talking about. I welcome the two questions that were posed, one by the member from Wellington-Halton Hills and the other from Kenora-Rainy River, and let me do my best to answer those questions.

As to the question from the member from Wellington-Halton Hills on how we're going to balance the budget: We have to take a combination of approaches here. We need to make sure that, of course, we restrain our spending, and we're doing that through different mechanisms in terms of freezing our salaries and those of the non-bargaining OPS and broader public service.

But another way to ensure that we are able to deal with this deficit is to grow our economy to make sure that we have jobs that are being created in this economy. That is the best possible way, as we are recovering from this recession, that we can deal with the issue of balancing our budget. Already, we're seeing that Ontario is leading in North America in terms of economic growth—1.6% of its GDP. It's reported by StatsCan and other independent

economic think tanks that Ontario is leading the pack, creating more jobs, and that is how we're going to balance the budget.

As to the question posed by the member from Kenora-Rainy River: I have not seen any study that shows that \$7 billion will come out of the pockets of Ontarians because of the HST, and I will be very interested to see that report you are referring to. We are talking about \$2.5 billion extra because of the HST, and all of that \$2.5 billion extra is being sent back to Ontarians either through personal income tax cuts or corporate tax cuts. That is why this plan is a revenue-neutral plan. It creates equity in the way we conduct taxes in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** It's a pleasure to join in today's debate on Bill 16, the 2010 budget bill.

For a document that's 196 pages long, it really doesn't contain much information. Within those 196 pages, I do not see any clear plan to create jobs and reduce the deficit, or creative ways to return Ontario back to its former prosperity.

When Minister Duncan tabled the budget on March 25, it proved to Ontarians that this government has no real plan for Ontario. In a world where all other jurisdictions are introducing creative new ways to recover from the recession and create jobs, we see a government which, instead of coming up with new ideas, has left it up to the taxpayer to fund their usual tax-and-spend Liberal policies.

This budget document does not deal with what taxpayers consider two very important issues, the deficit and the debt. This budget has tripled our reliance on federal welfare payments. It has doubled the debt, and our deficit is now higher than that of the other nine provinces combined. Now we have before us a budget bill with no plan, no roadmap. This document does not give a sense of relief to the young families who want to buy a new home, to the seniors who are dealing with skyrocketing hydro bills, to the middle class families who are looking for some relief from taxes or to all of those Ontarians who suffered job losses during the economic recession.

Right now I'd like to focus on jobs. It's what Ontarian families need right now instead of more taxes. Ontario has one of the highest jobless rates in the country at 9.1%. Ontario suffered a net loss of 3,900 full-time jobs in March alone. I ask you, where are all of the jobs that the Premier promised? As of March, the McGuinty Liberals are still more than 100,000 jobs short of their own target.

Under the PC governments of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, Ontario hit the one million mark in manufacturing jobs. Dalton McGuinty inherited these jobs, but now there are only less than 800,000 manufacturing jobs remaining, fewer than what existed at the end of the Bob Rae era. Of the 279,000 manufacturing jobs lost by McGuinty's Liberals, 206,000 of them disappeared before the economic recession was at its peak.



The one place where McGuinty seems determined to create jobs is in the public sector. The sunshine list of public employees earning more than \$100,000 has tripled since the McGuinty Liberals came to power in 2003. The public sector has grown at a rate of eight times that of the private sector. This is not sustainable growth. The private sector needs an even playing field so that they can create jobs and boost the economy like we have in the past. Stimulating growth in the private sector is the key to getting Ontario growing again.

As I mentioned, another key item that taxpayers are concerned about is the debt. The debt will increase from \$148.7 billion in 2003-04 to \$289.3 billion in 2012-13. This confirms that in nine years Dalton McGuinty will have saddled Ontario families with double their debt.

Even though we already knew it, the 2010 budget also confirmed that last year Ontario became a have-not province. We received some \$300 million from the federal government last year, and Ontario is now expecting to get \$972 million in equalization payments from the better-performing provinces this year—nearly triple over last year's. And who knows what will be coming in subsequent years?

Families need to know now more than ever that they are getting the best bang for their buck. For most families, this is particularly true for the health care system. Young families want to know that as they grow their families, doctors will be there to take care of their sick child. Seniors want to know that as they age, health and long-term-care systems will be there to support them. Middle-aged families want to know that their health care system will be there to provide preventive measures to keep them healthy as they age. I think many agree that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

This budget increases health care spending by \$2.6 billion, from \$43.5 billion in 2009-10 to \$46.1 billion. What have we got for the new money? We cannot forget that, to date, taxpayers have paid \$15 billion for Dalton McGuinty's health tax, yet despite all that extra revenue on the ground, we continue to see the challenges in health care.

I've spoken in the Legislature before about the health care concerns the residents in my riding of Dufferin-Caledon have. I was alarmed to learn last summer that a review of the underserved area program could mean that communities in Dufferin-Caledon will lose financial incentives to recruit and retain much-needed doctors. Many families in my constituency cannot find a doctor because my community is so underserved.

Six years ago, Premier McGuinty promised to recruit and train more doctors. He also promised that no person would go without needed medical attention. Six years later, nearly 20,000 residents in Dufferin-Caledon are still waiting for a family physician. The town of Caledon in my riding has experienced the most significant population growth, and the Central West LHIN is projected to be the fastest-growing region in the province over the next 10 years. Based on the current physician-to-patient ratio of one doctor for every 1,380 people, the

recommended number of physicians is 41. By this formula, Caledon alone, which is only half of my riding of Dufferin-Caledon, is underserved by 18 physicians. The government's own report prepared by the Central West LHIN clearly indicates that Caledon is underserved for primary health care physicians.

1710

All health studies indicate that access to a family doctor is essential for early detection and management of chronic diseases. It is also the only way a family can access the many other services available to them through the family health teams. Families in my riding are paying the McGuinty health tax, yet many do not have a family doctor to show for it.

I rose in the House numerous times last fall to speak on the plight of children's aid societies across Ontario. Minister, 36 of the 51 children's aid societies in Ontario filed section 14 requests with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services last fall, meaning they could not fulfill their legislative mandate with the budget cuts the minister had forced on them midway through the last fiscal year. Historically, there had never been so many section 14 requests filed with the ministry.

The services that children's aid societies provide are mandated by legislation. They have a legislative responsibility to respond when children are in jeopardy and respond in a timely way. Some children's aid societies across the province were forced to cut front-line services and staff from their offices as a result of the changes last summer. While the government provided some CASs with an 11th-hour band-aid, approximately half of the CASs will begin this new fiscal year with a shortfall of up to 10%.

Much of the children's aid societies' work, especially in early intervention to prevent long-term involvement with families, is not funded. Without this investment, there is a great risk of escalating numbers of children coming into long-term or permanent care. Many children's aid societies have been forced to cut or eliminate family preservation and other preventive programs for high-risk families in many regions across our province.

Children's aid societies are concerned that the full impact of the economic downturn has not been felt yet, and now caseloads are beginning to climb due to the economic downturn, with no provision to address these increases. According to the children's aid societies, they are starting to report an increase in child abuse and neglect intake calls, but there is no provision in the budget to enable children's aid societies to meet the growing demand for child protection intervention.

Peel CAS, or the children's aid society in my riding, believes their crisis is a result of the ministry's decision to roll back their economic adjustment to lessen inflation and cut their budgets in the middle of last year's fiscal year. That is not what I would call appropriate financial planning. It is simply not fair for these children's aid societies, who are legislatively mandated to provide care and protection for vulnerable children, to be given the



funding from one hand only to have the other hand take it away halfway through the year.

The region of Peel receives the lowest per capita funding of any jurisdiction in Ontario. They serve 11% of the child population and operate in one of the province's most disadvantaged regions, yet barely 3% of all child welfare dollars are invested in Peel region. Peel has the highest rate of children living in poverty in the GTA and they serve the fastest-growing and most diverse region in Ontario. All Peel is looking for is fair allocation of the funds to meet the needs of their growing community. Their current funding model has placed them at the back of the line, and the race hasn't even started yet.

I'd like to turn our attention to the developmental service sector and how they will be most affected by the 2010 Liberal budget. First, let me say that community living agencies across Ontario do an incredible job providing services within our communities for families living with a developmental disability. Their commitment to the community and to the clients is second to none, and for that they should be acknowledged. But Community Livings are feeling let down by the McGuinty Liberals. They are disappointed that this government has decided not to honour their promises made in 2007 to provide funds this fiscal year to address operational pressures in the developmental services sector, and there are many. Community Living has continued to deliver their message concerning the serious ramifications of the government going back on their promises for the sector.

Community Living Ontario has warned the McGuinty Liberals of the effect of not following through on this year's commitment to funding, and it will have significant negative effects on the sector and people supported by it. Based on the premise that the promised funding would be forthcoming, these funds are largely accounted for in the financial commitments that agencies have already made for the coming year. In many cases, the funds were to address contractual commitments, increased premium costs based on benefits, increased WSIB costs, facilitation of settlements for more than 50 agencies that are in bargaining at present, and non-negotiable contractual and legislative costs, such as pay equity. Community living agencies are now forced to reduce expenditures, which, for families serviced by this great organization, means layoffs and/or permanently reduced services yet again.

The budget announced \$36 million in new funding in the developmental service sectors to address urgent needs for some of those individuals and families who are facing crisis situations. While it sounds great on the outside, what many do not know is that, currently, there is a waiting list of almost 12,000 people waiting for residential service and more than 7,000 waiting for other services. This does not begin to help the families who are struggling to find residential care for their child, the families who need respite care or the families who are unselfishly taking care of their child with a developmental disability at home with very little assistance. It is too bad that we are living in a province where a family has to go into crisis mode before their needs will be met.

Like I said earlier, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and the same can be said here. Failure to provide transitional supports at the right time causes harm to individuals and families and causes society even more in the long run. Families are increasingly finding themselves in desperate and vulnerable situations as a result of the McGuinty Liberals' continuing inattentiveness to their very real needs. People are at increasing risk of falling through the widening and predictable gaps in the system, resulting in potential harm and even death.

This is why the PC caucus and I continually say that this is a no-news budget. Families are still waiting for doctors; children's aid societies are still waiting for the support to provide legislated, mandated services to children and families; and the developmental sector is still searching for support from your government that was promised over three years ago. It's an unfortunate indication of the government's interest in trying out new programs and introducing new programs instead of actually focusing on what the government has already committed and actually trying to fund those sufficiently. I think it's a terrible shame that we are looking at new programs such as full-day learning when there is an entire sector of child care providers that are literally going to be eliminated from their business model because they will no longer have a business model that makes sense when you eliminate five- and six-year-olds out of their business model.

You had an opportunity with this budget to actually focus on some programs that are already in place that simply need to be properly funded instead of adding new baubles and new initiatives. It's an opportunity that I believe the Liberal government missed. I think they were more interested in trying new programs and getting people to stop thinking about the programs that they have not been able to fund sufficiently. I've highlighted a few in my speech today, but the obvious ones for Dufferin-Caledon are community living agencies and parents who are in desperate need of programs like Passport and special services at home. Instead, we are funding some new programs which I also don't believe in the long run we are going to be able to financially sustain under the debt and the deficit that we are incurring every day through the Liberal rule.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I just wanted to support a couple of things that the member from Dufferin-Caledon has talked about, and that is the poverty that she's experiencing in her part of the world, something that we, in Toronto, experienced for a long, long time. People used to attack us all the time for being a city with all these services serving the poor—welfare—and everyone. I'm really happy—I'm not happy; I'm not happy that poverty is spreading—I'm not—but it's interesting that poverty has spread beyond Toronto and that there are other communities outside of Toronto in the GTA suffering a great deal because the money is not there, and all of a sudden, people are finding themselves in trouble



socially and economically, and they're looking for services that are not there. As a result, people like the member from Dufferin-Caledon are looking for fairness in funding models as they relate to hospital services and/or social services.

1720

She is right to raise it because it has been a concern that I have known about for quite some time, because I've had deputations in my office with people from the GTA talking about, how can we help them deal with this growing problem in the GTA and, I suspect, beyond?

The other comment she makes has to do with Community Living, but that's not the only organization that is under assault. There are hundreds of non-profit agencies that provide incredible services to people who struggle, whether they be social, psychological or economic, and they're looking for support. They've been working with part-time staff for 15 years and they haven't been able to put full-time staff to provide the supports. They're not there.

She's right to raise those issues and it's important for politicians of all political parties to hear them.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I'd like to add a few comments on the presentation by the member from Dufferin-Caledon and even on the comments from the member from Trinity-Spadina.

We must not forget one thing when we come to this House and speak about what the government is, what the government represents and what the government should do or shouldn't do. Everything we do is aimed at making our people feel better or provide better government. They know that the government does not address one particular issue with the presentation of their own budget. They have to take into consideration everything, all kinds of services that the government delivers to the people of Ontario. Be they seniors; people in need of affordable housing, health care, education; single parents; single mothers; or people looking for jobs, they have to all be addressed in the context of the budget, and then the delivery of those programs from the government.

It's not an easy job. Both of the people on the other side had the opportunity to be on this side of the House. They know how it works, especially when we are dealing with an economic situation as we did, where we had to take, if you will, the bull by the horns and say, "If we have to borrow, if we have to increase the debt, whatever. But we can't see our people losing their jobs. We have to house the people. This is the time."

Those are not easy decisions. No government wants to address that. But we did it and we did it the right way. We were the first ones to address children's issues, poverty issues. I think we were the first ones to directly initiate those particular situations. Those are three of many that the government faces. I hope the opposition understands that. I hope that we will move on with the budget—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** One of the government members suggested earlier this afternoon that some of the comments that members were making with respect to some of the speeches that were being given today weren't particularly on point because they didn't relate to what was being said. In this particular case, I am pleased to comment on the remarks made by the member from Dufferin-Caledon, which I think are exactly spot on, both in her capacity as the critic for community and social services, for children and youth services, and as the excellent member representing the constituents of Dufferin-Caledon.

What she's talking about and the problem that we have with respect to this government's budget is, we've got this huge increase in spending, but what do we have to show for it? She gave some very salient examples, one being in health care, where we've spent over \$15 billion in health tax over the last few years, but what have we got to show for it? We still have a huge number of people in Dufferin-Caledon, and I suspect in all of our ridings across Ontario, who are still without a family physician, which is absolutely essential in developing responses in dealing with early intervention and the proper management of chronic conditions and other illnesses.

She also mentioned the urgent situation that's being faced by children's aid societies across the province of Ontario, the concerns they have with respect to funding and the fact that they are providing mandated services. These are services they absolutely have to provide, yet this government is not providing them with the resources that they need in order to do their job. I would say this is especially important in the context of today's economy, where we're seeing more and more families that are increasingly stressed by their economic circumstances. That, in turn, puts an extra stress on the children's aid societies, because there are more and more families needing their support. This is something that hasn't been addressed adequately by this government in this budget.

Finally, with respect to the developmental services sector, I wish I could say more on this, because this is a situation that urgently requires attention. Each and every one of us has families coming into our office every day, parents who are desperate to find places for their adult children to live. We can and must do more.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments? There being no more questions and comments, the member from Dufferin-Caledon has up to two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you for the comments to the members from Trinity-Spadina, York West and Whitby-Oshawa.

I think I'd like to leave the debate of the budget with one point. It is that we have a responsibility to actually fund the legislative programs that we've already committed to as a government. I say that collectively, because there are pieces of legislation on the books right now that were passed by an NDP government, a PC government and, of course, a Liberal government. We have all participated in seeing the value of those programs.



What I think is so frustrating for us and our communities is the announcements are made, the programs are announced, and then we see down the road that, in fact, they are not funded. Any program that is not going to be funded sufficiently is setting itself up for failure.

I think that we could have done a better job in this budget of actually looking at the programs that we currently provide to Ontario residents and to Ontario communities and ensuring that, in fact, they are properly funded right now, before we look at any new programs and any new, exciting ideas. We have lots of ideas. All of us could come up with 10 ideas today of new programs that we would like to see funded by the provincial government. But the reality is we also have to look at the fiscal situation and ask, "Can we do it, and can we sustain it?"

This budget shows, more than anything for me, that you cannot keep announcing new programs and not make a commitment or admit that you are not sufficiently funding the ones that are already in place.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I really was looking forward to speaking to this bill, because the focus of my remarks is going to be about the corporations and the corporate tax cuts. I hope to take the whole 20 minutes, if I can, just to—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Ten minutes: How could that be? How can one deliver a speech in 10 minutes? It's not possible. I can't believe it. I hope the Liberals are going to give me their 10 minutes if we have unanimous consent.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** No.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Why wouldn't you want to do that?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I've got to get going.

I've got to tell you, I've been awfully worried in the last 10 or 15 years about what is happening in this country and in this province with respect to who it is that we blame when we have problems in our economy.

What I have witnessed over the last 15 or 20 years that I've been around here is that we are not blaming the rich for their excesses. We have, for the last 15 or 20 years, begun to blame the poor. We have begun to attack those who are on welfare. We call them all sorts of names: undeserving, welfare bums, cheats. We go after single mothers. We go after the employment insurance cheats. We go after those who are on workers' comp. We go after them because they're not legitimately there; they're probably faking an injury.

We've been doing it for a long, long time, and it used not to be this way. The focus of our anger in the old days used to be those who had a whole lot of money. We used to support the working men and women, those who had unions, because we understood that if you were in a union, you were after better wages, better benefits—God bless—pensions. We all thought those were good things

that we all aspired to, not just some workers but all workers. We have changed things around. It's not the rich we go after now. We go after the poor, and we go after the unionized workers. We see that more at the federal level. Although we see it here, too; it's less pronounced, much more subtle, but we see it here as well. I think we've got to deal with that, in my humble view.

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I think what we've got to deal with is this problem that somehow we have to continue cutting corporate taxes in order to create jobs. Both the Harper Conservatives and the McGuinty Liberals are committed to that strategy. They fundamentally believe it, or they are persuaded to believe in it because there are people with the pecunia persuading, convincing them, however gently, or with the power of the money, to say, "We need to cut corporate taxes. We've got to create jobs, and this is the only way to do it." If you listen to members, some who are here and some who are not here, that's the line they push. I suspect there will be two-minute retorts talking about how good this initiative is.

The Liberals at the provincial level are giving away five billion bucks to the corporations. Nay, whether they deliver jobs or not, whether they create jobs or not, it is irrelevant. We simply give it away. Here, take it. There is no guarantee of any job to be created—none. It is just money we give away on the promise that they will.

For the last 20 years, federally under Liberals, provincially under Conservatives, now federally under Tories, and provincially under Liberals, it's the same story. They keep giving our money away, and someone's got to pay. You don't give away those kinds of dollars without someone in the middle class having to dig deep to pay for that tax cut. It doesn't come cheap.

This Liberal government says we've got a huge deficit. It used to be \$25 billion; magically it went down to \$21 billion. Yet they've got \$5 billion to give away to corporations—\$5 billion. We've got a deficit. These fine Liberals here, my friends, some of you are happy to give away to 97% of the public an income tax cut. We've got a deficit, I remind you—big. Now it's \$22 billion instead of \$25 billion.

We need money, yet you've got a revenue minister with his perpetual smile saying, "Yes, 93% of you are getting an income tax cut." He says that with a nice smile. It's supposed to make us feel good, but we've got a deficit. Someone's got to pay for the deficit, yet the government seems to have money to give me an income tax cut.

Do you understand? I think it's wrong. Something doesn't add up in this little southern Italian mind. It doesn't add up. I just don't get it. If you need money, why do you give it away?

For the last 15 or 20 years, we have given everything that the corporations have wanted. The free trade agreement was about creating jobs; it was about doing something good for the corporations. Twenty years later, wages are going down; they're flatlined or going down.



We're making less today than some people were making in 1980. We've given the corporations a dream to be fulfilled on a promise that they would create jobs and that they would be more productive, and their productivity would increase.

Yet my good buddy Mark Carney—actually he's not a buddy; I don't really know him. Mark Carney said "what everyone on Bay Street knows: The largest Canadian corporations are doing a terrible job at increasing productivity and, therefore, at raising Canadian living standards and competing internationally. He noted that productivity had actually declined through this recession when during every other recession it has gone up.

"He left no doubt who was responsible: 'In general, while there is always more to do, governments have put in place conditions for a productivity revival. Business, thus far, has disappointed.'" But we keep giving billions away because the corporations say it's going to create jobs. There has never, now or before, been any evidence put forth that it actually creates jobs, but we actually give the money away. I don't get it.

You have Mark Carney saying that governments are spending—from the taxpayer, from those left who have some money to pay—for productivity purposes by giving it to corporations, money they put aside for their own investments, and yet when it comes to making our workforce more productive, they're not there, but that is the intent of giving our money to them. For the last 20 years we haven't seen that.

We see more and more part-time workers than ever before. We see more college professors being part-time than ever before. Half of our workforce in community colleges are part-time contract workers. We see university professors in many of our universities—part-time contract workers.

I thought it was going to be better. I thought that this climate of giving away so many dollars to the corporations was going to create a better place for people, for working men and women. It's not doing that. Where is that dream of ours that we are losing? We give it to be more productive, and we're not. So why are we giving the money away? Why do you do that? How do you defend it, especially when the facts are clear, as I'm stating them, as I think other people have stated them, when you know you have a serious deficit? The corporation is, after all, managed by people, and presumably those people live in this society, beings in the world, not outside of the world, and therefore, they ought to make a contribution to that society which they are exploiting daily.

So don't give them any more money. Take it back. Take it back and create real good jobs. Direct that money to the corporations that are indeed creating jobs. Direct that money to the manufacturing sector that is indeed creating the jobs and take it away from those that are not.

Those income tax cuts that we're getting—we don't need them. We need those dollars to reduce the deficit, create good jobs, keep people employed, make sure that the non-profit sector that has been working for 15 years

doing good work has enough money to be able to help the undeserving, the poor, those who desperately need governments to be there to support them. That's what we need the money for. Help me, some good, left-leaning Liberals; help me. Do a two-minuter to tell me that you agree with me, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments? The member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I was going to stand up.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Sorry. You both stood up at the same time. Pick one.

The member from Eglinton—Lawrence.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I think the member from Trinity—Spadina has raised some very thought-provoking questions, and that is the role of governments in trying to encourage corporations through tax cuts to create jobs.

For some of us Liberals, this is a very difficult thing because I can remember being in this House when the Harris government was very pronounced in the fact that tax cuts would create jobs. That was their very strong belief. I can remember even that Chris Stockwell, when he was in this House, said he didn't think it was going to really be wise to do it, especially if you've got a deficit. Even Chris Stockwell, who's a Conservative, was saying that.

But the dilemma is that governments are caught in the reality of this economic world. What the pressure is is that there are so many companies who really don't give a darn whether they're in Ontario, Guatemala or Peru; they will go anywhere, just like the Celtic tiger. When Ireland lowered all their tax rates, they came into Ireland—everybody went to Ireland. I can remember a neighbour of mine who moved off Duplex—he's going to Ireland. You know what happened to the Irish economy? It was the low-tax economy.

You know, that tiger is now a pussycat, because all those companies with those low tax rates took off and went to Estonia, and then Estonia collapsed and became a pussycat. So I think you've got a point there. But the reality is: How do you keep these companies here; how do you make it attractive? One of the things they keep saying is, "We're not going to come or stay in this province—we're not going build cars here, we're not going do manufacturing, we're not going to do whatever we do—unless there's a competitive tax regime." That's the reality we're caught in, in this year 2010. It's not—

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**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** How do you make it competitive? That's a very good question. How do you make Ontario competitive? You can't make it competitive in just tax regimes; you've got to make it competitive in other aspects as well.

The reasons that companies move to other jurisdictions: First among them is probably taxes. Another is the cost of other things. Certainly one of the principle areas would be health care—a good health care situation.



Education would certainly be another reason why a company would move.

The cost of electricity would be a reason for a corporation to move into Ontario or out of Ontario. The north is shutting down because of the cost of electricity. Coming up, the electricity market in Ontario is going to have the HST applied to it. It's going to have time-of-day metering, which I'm told could increase costs of electricity up to 30%. That's probably the upper end, but that would be a huge increase. There's an 11% rate hike that has just been introduced on Ontario electricity.

The non-peak rate for electricity has also increased to the point where some people feel it is less of an incentive now than it should be. The cost of electricity in this province is going to skyrocket by double-digit increases of perhaps 20%, 25% over the next year or two, and that is going to cause further disruption with industry exiting Ontario to other places. We've seen it in the north, where electricity is a huge factor in mining and smelting and a huge factor in pulp and paper, and we're going to see it in the south in the second exodus.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I have a quick two minutes in response to the speech by the member from Trinity-Spadina, who began by talking about the fact that in his recent memory, he seems to feel we have begun to attack things on the backs of the poor. He began by saying it's the welfare cheats and those who cheat on employment insurance who we seem to be attacking. Well, I hope that if there are welfare cheats and employment insurance cheats, we are trying to find that money and ensure it stays within the system so that people who need Ontario disability support, Ontario Works and employment insurance have a little bit more resources left to draw upon.

He talks about his 15 or 20 years. I'll tell you that in my going on seven years here, one of the things I find very interesting is that nothing changes. At the end of the day, when you listen to the debate, it unfortunately comes around to the same thing all the time. In my seven years here, the Conservative position on a variety of issues hardly ever changes or even has some fine distinction to it, and the third party, the NDP's positions, as I listened to him speak on corporate income tax reductions, never changes either. The same thing: Any income tax reduction is bad; any corporate income tax reduction is bad—100% the same all the time.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** What's your position? What's the Liberal position?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Well, we're in the middle. That's the great thing about being a Liberal, my friend. And you see, he says the same thing all the time.

I've sat in the room in the last seven years with many corporations. I don't pretend I love them, but I do pretend that from time to time they do hold some cards and we need to respond to them. Unfortunately, it seems that the NDP never remembers that if we do keep them here, they

do provide jobs at the end of the day and they do help the people we all want to help.

So I'm sometimes dismayed by the fact that positions seem so entrenched after so long that there isn't—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I listened carefully to the eloquent words from the member for Trinity-Spadina, and I do hold him in a great deal of respect.

But let me tell you how the economy has changed. For most of the 1990s, the Canadian dollar was at 64 cents vis-à-vis the American dollar. Every product that we manufactured here in Ontario was going into other markets, because most of the other markets are priced in US dollars, at a 40% discount. That was a huge advantage for Ontarian and Canadian manufacturers.

He talks about a piece from Mark Carney, the governor of the Bank of Canada. Let me tell you what Mark Carney has said—that for the foreseeable future, the Canadian dollar is going to be very close to parity with the United States dollar.

One of the reasons that we've tried to bring a reformed tax regime in the province of Ontario is if we're going to be dealing with a dollar at par, we need to have some other advantages to try to keep Ontario products competitive in the international markets. That's one of the reasons why we're bringing in a reformed tax structure.

He fails to talk about something I'm very proud of because one of the founding members spent his formative years in Peterborough: Jim Balsillie and Research in Motion. Jim and his partner, Mike Lazaridis, have a consistent track record of bringing innovation and creating new jobs in the province Ontario. That's a good example of a Canadian-based manufacturer that will take these tax cuts and pour them into innovation to make sure his particular product, which most members in this House use, stays ahead of the competition on a daily basis. There are these Ontario success stories.

In my own riding of Peterborough, Flying Colours is a company that refurbishes jets. They're using the tax breaks to expand their workforce. These are the kinds of examples that are out there. Not all of them are like that, but these are concrete examples of tax cuts to create—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Trinity-Spadina has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yes, the member from Peterborough makes mention of Research in Motion, and these are good examples of how the private sector, from time to time, comes up with a grand new idea. It was a great idea, and we support them. But we know that the private sector still lags behind in terms of investments in new equipment, technology and sophisticated training. We know this. There are some that do it, but for the most part, we lag behind.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** We ought to know, and if the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan doesn't know, he



ought to know this. He says that he's been here for seven years and nothing changes. Good God. Do you see yourself changing in your position? When you talk about being in the middle, have you moved further to the left or further to the right? Where are you? Are you always in the middle, or are you closer to the right? In what way have you changed?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** No, let him speak. It's okay.

In what way have you changed? You have not changed one single bit except, these days, you're moving closer to the Mike Harris that you don't like.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Can we stop the clock for a minute? The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, you had your chance to comment. We'd now like to hear the response.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The Liberals haven't changed except that they move to the right when they need to, and they move to the left when they need to. These days, they're moving to the right, and that's not a change for Liberals; that's what they do.

The new reality, member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, is the following: Many employers are replacing full-time, permanent workers with short-term, temporary and contract workers who earn less and have less job security. That's the new reality. How are you making that new reality, Liberal member from somewhere in the north, different through the things you are doing? How are you making a difference? Speak to that, member from—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** It's sort of disheartening to see two of my fellow compatriots arguing, one from northern Ontario and one from southern Italy. It's too bad. But I think that's part of the necessary debate that goes on in this place, because budgets are differences of opinion, obviously, in terms of how you deal with these astronomical problems that we have.

The context of this budget is a budget in extraordinary times. I think we in Ontario and in Canada have been somewhat fortunate, considering the impact that this financial meltdown has had on the whole world. If you just look at what has happened to countries like Portugal, Greece—the United States of America is still reeling; massive unemployment.

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If you look at California, it's 12.6% unemployment in California. They're basically in total gridlock in California, and I'm not just talking about the highways. In California, because of the Proposition 13 mechanism, they're not allowed to raise taxes unless they have a local referendum. Obviously, nobody's going to raise taxes in the middle of a recession when they don't have a job, so they can't raise taxes; they can't borrow money because their credit rating is essentially at zero; and they are

forced to lay off people in California. They're laying off government workers, they're laying off university professors, teachers, because they don't have the resources through taxation, through borrowing or through an expanding economy through taxes that they would collect corporately or personally. They essentially can't raise those tax dollars to provide for the public. California, which is the seventh-largest economy in the western world—it's quite a huge economy; the size of Canada, basically—is gridlocked because they can't make any moves. They're frozen.

This is a state that has an incredible climate, incredible resources and incredible academic institutions. It has everything that you would think a province, state or country should have, but because of this situation that they've gone through in this economic meltdown, they're stuck. I'm just pointing that out because I think it demonstrates how difficult this has been not only for our government, but for the governments in Ottawa, in England—in every country.

Given those circumstances, I think what we've been able to achieve in this government is quite laudable. It's not perfect, as no budget is perfect, but it's quite laudable that despite the downturn—corporate profit, corporate taxation has gone down in Ontario, there's no doubt about it. Personal income tax has gone down and the need to provide for more social assistance has gone up. When people lost their jobs, we had to provide more funding for those in need, and we sometimes have to make up for rising needs—for instance, our Second Career program. We've never had such an extensive program in all the years that we've had a province, where essentially a person who goes back to school and gets retrained can get quite a sizable sum of money—I think up to about \$28,000 over two years—to retrain and, hopefully, find a job and pay for their rent, their expenses. We've had to find the money to do that, to basically deal with the ramifications of this economic meltdown. That's in the budget, which is a good thing.

The child care money that's in the budget I think is a very important investment, because there is no national child care program in Canada, sad to say, so we've had to invest provincial money into that. Certainly, it would be great if there could be even more, because one need that's not talked about enough in our province is the need to provide for good, professional child care for our children. The reality of this city, this province, is that parents, especially mothers, really cannot make do with the child care that exists today. They are driven from pillar to post. They're stressed out. Both partners have to work. They're up at 6 o'clock in morning. You can see them on the Dufferin bus, dragging their kids off to some child care centre.

It is very difficult on mothers, especially without proper child care. Therefore, in this budget, we've tried to address that. Again, as I said, I wish we had more to address that, because it is an incredibly stressful situation that exists in our society today. I really don't know how some mothers do it. I give them praise for doing what



they do with their children, considering how difficult it is.

The other thing which I think is very good for families and for people who are trying to get by by working, taking care of their children, is the all-day kindergarten. It's an incredibly good start, given the economy we're in, that we're starting this program—which, again, will not only help the children, the four- and five-year-olds, but it will help the parents by ensuring they will get this continuum of care in one setting, hopefully.

Again, I know that you can criticize that it's not a perfect program; it was just a start-up. We wish we could have done more, but the fact that we're doing as much as we are in this economy is another laudable part of this budget, given the challenge.

Those are two very tangible day-to-day things that I know that a lot of regular families in Ontario, certainly in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence, do appreciate. It doesn't matter what political stripe you are, they like that and they want to see more of that. They think that when government does that, government is good. I think we've got to do more of that kind of thing, hopefully, in the future.

The other thing that's good in this budget is the continued investment in infrastructure. Infrastructure means building more roads, more transit, more schools, more retrofitting of buildings; they're greening a lot of the schools in Ontario with better boiler systems etc. These dollars that go into improving our schools, hospitals, roads and transit systems are good in that people who normally would not be working are now working in meaningful jobs, and at the same time, they're building better infrastructure, better schools and better hospitals that will be of benefit for us for decades to come. That commitment we've made to \$32 billion over two years, in co-operation with the federal government, is a very laudable thing in this budget which not enough people appreciate, given the economic meltdown that we've gone through.

That continues in this budget, and that's one of the reasons why the deficit is where it is. Everybody is obviously concerned about the level of the deficit, but again, it's a choice. You could have a lower deficit, less investment in infrastructure, less investment in child care, less investment in all-day kindergarten or less investment in health care or education in our elementary and high schools, but the choice is made that we don't want to be caught in that California conundrum there, where all of a

sudden, if you start reducing the amount of economic activity that's been generated by government, you basically end up having fewer people with disposable income. Therefore, the private sector also suffers because people don't buy television sets—not that I'm advocating people to buy television sets; in fact, I think we have too many TVs in this country. We don't need five televisions per home. I hope the pages here only have one TV in their home. That's all you really need; you don't need five or six. The member from Trinity-Spadina only has one little black-and-white one in his basement; I know that and I applaud him for that. He watches the soccer games on Sunday and that's all he needs.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Soccer? World Cup.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Yes, the World Cup coming in South Africa—right.

Just in terms of the health care constraint in this budget, the beginning of the control of some of our health care costs I think is something that the public is very supportive of, because it's just totally out of control. I don't really blame the Big Pharma; I don't blame them. I think our whole society is too connected to drugs. We rely so much on drugs. Our heads hurt, our backs hurt; drugs on TV for everything, drugs wherever you go—drugstores everywhere. I think we have more drug stores in Canada than anywhere else the world. We've got more drugstores than corner stores. I don't know how that's possible.

Let's get away from reliance on drugs and let's invest more money, as this budget does, on preventive approaches: fitness, walking, running, playing soccer and eating less, which we all have to do. We eat too much in this country, and that's the tragedy—that there are so many people who don't have enough to eat, then there are so many people who eat too much. Maybe those of us who eat too much should put some of our money aside and help provide food for those who don't have enough to eat.

Then you go to the bookstore: They're selling books on diets and then books on cooking, all beside each other. So you go to a diet—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It being almost 6 o'clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*



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<b>Brownell, Jim (LIB)</b>	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
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Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
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Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 20 April 2010**

**Mardi 20 avril 2010**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Steve Peters

**Président**  
L'honorable Steve Peters

**Clerk**  
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**Greffière**  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 20 April 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 20 avril 2010

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Sikh prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### FULL DAY EARLY LEARNING STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'APPRENTISSAGE DES JEUNES ENFANTS À TEMPS PLEIN

Mrs. Dombrowsky moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 242, An Act to amend the Education Act and certain other acts in relation to early childhood educators, junior kindergarten and kindergarten, extended day programs and certain other matters / Projet de loi 242, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation et d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la maternelle et le jardin d'enfants, les programmes de jour prolongé et d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate? Minister of Education.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Thank you, Speaker. I'll be sharing my time with the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

This is an exciting day, indeed, as we are moving forward with this piece of important legislation. The Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act is a monumental piece of legislation which, if passed, will make a significant and positive improvement in the lives of our students and in our education system. It would give our students more opportunities right from the very start. It would give more families a stronger support network. It would give Ontario a leg up in this globalized economy by contributing to the formation of a stronger workforce.

Children who participate in full-day learning will be better prepared for grade 1. Their parents will have peace of mind while at work, knowing that their children are being well cared for in an enriching, engaging learning environment.

Although full-day kindergarten programs currently exist in different school boards across Ontario, the structure and scope of our integrated full-day model is unpre-

cedented. We want to provide a clear, coherent framework for school boards to offer full-day learning and we want to put in place the various components of the initiative, including before- and after-school programs. The Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010 will do just that.

It would, if passed, ensure that the entire full-day program and its staff are held to the highest quality and safety standards, as is any other component of our education system. This legislation would recognize the new role of early childhood educators in full-day learning. This new program would require teachers, early childhood educators, principals, school board staff and staff from municipalities to work together to benefit our children. This legislation, if passed, would ensure that collaboration happens smoothly.

In addition, Bill 242 would, if passed, give school boards the responsibility and the authority to implement this exciting new program, including the extended day programs offered before and after school. This would provide a seamless, integrated day for our youngest learners. Students participating in full-day learning would be in one location with high-quality, play-based activities and familiar faces all day long. Furthermore, Bill 242, if passed, would enable boards to offer extended day programs for older children aged six to 12, and to offer the programs throughout the year, including summer breaks, professional activity days and any other school holidays. This bill also clarifies that school boards would retain the right to enter into agreements with third parties to offer programs for children aged six to 12 and, on non-instructional days such as PA days, holidays and summer holidays, for four- and five-year-olds.

The role of third party providers in offering services inspired lively discussions during our committee hearings. We are very grateful for all of those who took the time to come and make their presentations at our committee. I do want to assure them that we listened very carefully to what they had to say. As a result of their input, we have made amendments to clarify the role that third party providers may play going forward. I want to make it clear: Third party providers currently operating programs on school premises can continue to provide care and offer programs for children in other age groups, such as children six to 12 years of age, and to operate programs in schools for children of all ages beyond the regular school year. In addition, we intend to allow supporting regulations that would allow, on a transitional basis, those school boards that currently have third party operators providing programs on school premises to



continue to offer before- and after-school programs for four- and five-year-olds. I think it's important to clarify that there will be a transition put in place. We've heard the concerns of stakeholders related to transition, and if this legislation is passed we will ensure that they have the support they need to transition to the full model. So ultimately, there is an expectation that we will have a fully integrated full-day learning program offered by school boards for four- and five-year-old children. We do recognize that there may be some agreements in place and we are prepared to work with boards on a transition plan.

There are also some amendments that respond to a broad range of stakeholder requests to clarify the roles of teachers and ECEs during the regular school day and the extended day programs.

**0910**

We are also taking other crucial steps forward to ensure that full-day learning is rolled out smoothly and effectively and that it is in place for nearly 600 schools by September of this year. The Ministry of Education recently released our new full-day-learning program document, which will guide teachers and early childhood educators as they work together in classrooms. The program document, called Full-Day Learning—Kindergarten Program, focuses on children's social, physical, emotional and academic development, and ensures that children in full-day learning will have a balanced day of learning and play, nurtured and supported by the adults in the classroom. It outlines different areas of learning and different ways that teachers and early childhood educators can help children approach learning.

Subject to the legislation being passed, we'll be holding training sessions next month and during the summer to introduce the full-day-learning kindergarten program to give teachers, early childhood educators, principals and board staff the tools and the resources that they need to make sure that the program is ready to get underway the first day of school in September.

In our budget last month, the Premier announced that we are investing \$245 million over the next two years in capital funding for full-day learning. That money will go to build, renovate and retrofit classrooms for full-day learning. A portion of the funding will also be used to support the costs of first-time furniture and equipment purchases and minor renovations to classrooms that will be necessary to accommodate the additional number of students that we expect with our offering.

School boards will receive \$10,000 per full-day-learning classroom. We have worked very closely with our school board partners. We believe that given the information we've received from them, this is an adequate amount of money to enable them to prepare for the students for full-day learning. This will ensure that children have welcoming spaces in which to learn.

Our government has also committed \$200 million in the coming school year and \$300 million in the 2010-11 school year, dedicated specifically to operating funding to make full-day learning a reality.

We asked school boards to submit their list of recommendations for phase 2 schools last week. Those are the schools that would be ready to offer full-day learning in September 2011; that would be the second tranche of this initiative. Just as we did before, with the first phase of schools for full-day learning, we have asked school boards to work closely with their coterminous boards as well as with the Best Start networks and their municipal partners in their regions to identify those school communities that would be best suited for the next phase of this exciting initiative.

We asked schools to consider things like geographic distribution when they were recommending schools for phase 2. For example, a primary consideration was to recommend schools in communities that will not have a phase 1 school.

Boards also considered available space in their schools. They were asked to prioritize schools that would not require major capital projects to be ready to welcome children in the first full-day learning.

I have to say that boards have been, I think, excellent in terms of how well they have worked, not just with the Ministry of Education, but with their coterminous boards and their community partners. We congratulate them and thank them for that. I'm looking forward to announcing the phase 2 schools soon, and to continuing to work with school boards and our partners as we continue to move forward with our phased-in implementation of full-day learning.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It has been going very well.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** It has been going very well. Again, it's because of the commitment we've had and the excitement in our communities. Parents are excited about this. School boards are excited about it. Certainly students are going to benefit from this as well.

As I said earlier, feedback from stakeholders and the public has helped make this bill stronger. There's been a question over here, "Why are people excited?" Well, people are excited because this is a first-of-its-kind program. This demonstrates the government's vision for building the best education system of anywhere in the world. We have other jurisdictions coming to Ontario on a regular basis to talk to us about our vision, to talk to us about how we are supporting our youngest learners. We're very eager not just to tell them about our plan, but also to show them the accolades that we have received from parents, from educators, from economists and from the business community.

We are working very hard. It's important that we get this right. It's important that we hear and listen to the feedback that has been provided to us. I believe the third reading of this bill reflects that we have done just that. We're going to continue to have discussions as well throughout the spring, through the summer and ongoing through the next school year so that we can share our successes and learn from phase 1 how we can improve the initiation of future phases of this very important piece of legislation.

Everyone in the House should appreciate the benefits of full-day learning. Although the debate of this legis-



lation has covered a wide range of topics and given voice to a range of different opinions on those topics, there is one concept about which all seem to agree: Full-day learning is good for our kids, and it will be good for Ontario. I've heard members on all sides of this House say very positive things about our program, that it will give young children the strong start that they need and that it will give Ontario a stronger future. I've heard some of them talk about how they and their families have benefited from full-day learning experiences themselves, in their own families. Those kinds of stories are great to hear, of course. As well, there are many, many studies, reports and experts telling us that full-day learning will give kids a stronger start, set them on the right path for future success, make life easier for families and pay off enormously in the long run.

Many in this House appreciate that when we focus resources on our youngest learners, that pays dividends for them. This is really about focusing on what's best to enable our children to succeed at school. We know that full-day learning experiences have had positive impacts in enabling educators, people in our school system, to identify how they can best meet the needs of our students. When they do that, the earlier they do that, the better the opportunity for the student to be successful as they proceed through school. That is absolutely consistent with the goal of our government to do everything we can to improve the opportunity for student achievement and, by extension, improve the graduation rate and the public perception of our publicly funded school systems. That has happened, and we want to continue to build on that.

We've heard from many parents from all across Ontario who have told us how excited they are about full-day learning. Parents have told us about how they're looking forward to being able to better balance their work and family life and better support their families because of the advantage of the integrated extended-day program. They're very excited to know that their children will be in the care of qualified educators. They know that that will have a very positive impact on their child's ability to be successful at school.

There is great consensus on the social and economic benefits of this program. This bill, if passed, will help us move one step closer to realizing those benefits that not just parents but people across Ontario have told us they expect from our education system.

The Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act is a key part of establishing full-day learning as a core element of our publicly funded education system. It would help us move forward and work with boards, early childhood educators, teachers and principals to implement this exciting new initiative. It would help us give our youngest children more opportunities and build a brighter future for them—in fact, for all of us. Full-day learning will be good for kids, good for families and good for Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I understand that the member from Kitchener—Conestoga is going to share the time.

0920

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** I'm privileged to join in the debate on third reading of Bill 242. As the minister said earlier, this is a monumental piece of legislation which will have a lasting impact on our children and on their families. It would, if passed, make full-day learning a reality in Ontario's publicly funded school boards. Full-day learning would require school boards to provide innovative, integrated services in their elementary schools. The Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010, would provide a clear framework for them to do so.

This bill would, if passed, amend the Education Act to give school boards the responsibility and the authority to implement full-day early learning for four- and five-year-olds, staffed by teachers and early childhood educators. It would recognize the new role of early childhood educators in the full-day-learning classrooms. It would give school boards the responsibility and authority to implement an extended day program before and after school for four- and five-year-olds, led by early childhood educators. We intend to introduce regulations, authorized by this legislation, which would give boards the authority and responsibility to set, charge and collect fees for those before- and after-school programs.

The Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act would, if passed, require collaboration among teachers and early childhood educators to provide high-quality and effective play-based education to support enhanced learning. It would ensure that the entire full-day-learning program and its staff are held to the same high quality and safety standards as any other component of the education system. It would, if passed, permit boards to offer before- and after-school programs for students aged six to 12. It would permit boards to offer programs throughout the year for pupils aged four to 12, including non-instructional days such as professional development days, school breaks and summer holidays.

Our stakeholders, including members of the education sector and the child care sector, provided valuable input on this bill. Their feedback led our government to propose several amendments to Bill 242 to the standing committee which considered the legislation before referring it to today's third reading. As the minister said, those amendments provide clarification around the roles that third party child care providers can play at our schools and within the full-day-learning program. We're thankful to all of those who took the time to tell us what they thought about Bill 242 and how the bill could be improved. The bill before us today is a stronger piece of legislation thanks to their input, and I'm pleased, of course, to be standing here today to speak in favour of Bill 242.

Our society has changed drastically in the last few decades. Those changes mean that we have to look at how we structure our education system to achieve the best learning outcomes for children and to support their families. The introduction of full-day learning is an exciting change to our education system, one that would



give children a stronger start and of course give their families better support. This legislation, if passed, would ensure that all four- and five-year-olds have access to that stronger start. It would ensure that their learning and emotional and social development is supported by qualified professionals. It would give their parents a guarantee that their child would be in a welcoming, engaging environment all day.

The experts have told us that full-day learning is one of the best ways to ensure the well-being and success of children, and it's our responsibility as public leaders to give that to them.

Now people from around Canada and across the globe are looking at what we're doing and watching how we move forward on this exciting project. Obviously, there's a lot of interest right here in Ontario for full-day learning. I've talked to students, teachers, early childhood educators, parents and all others who work in our schools, and there's a clear excitement, as the minister mentioned, throughout the education system and early learning world about full-day learning.

I'm sure that the excitement has grown over the last few weeks, as we have taken steps forward with our plans for implementation. We requested school boards to work with their other local boards and municipalities to identify which schools would be ready to offer full-day learning in phase 2 in September 2010. We introduced the draft full-day early learning kindergarten program, which would guide early childhood educators and teachers in the full-day-learning classroom. We announced capital funding which would help build, renovate and equip new classrooms for full-day learning. School and school board staff are looking forward to training sessions which will take place over the next few months and will help prepare them for the new program. And across the province, parents are enrolling their four- and five-year-olds in the program.

During debates in the House, during question period and in the media, there's been a lot of discussion about this piece of legislation and this program. Some have said it's too expensive. Some say the scope of the program is too wide, while others say it's not wide enough and that we should be doing more. The bottom line: Our government is taking a measured approach to implementing full-day learning. This legislation, if passed, would allow us to move forward on an initiative that would positively transform the lives of our youngest citizens. Full-day learning would help level the playing field, giving more children a stronger base so that they have a stronger chance of success at school and in life. This legislation would, if passed, provide a framework for a program that would give busy parents peace of mind, because they would know that their son or daughter was playing, learning and being engaged all day.

We would roll out full-day learning in phases, starting with approximately 600 schools this fall. That means that up to 35,000 children and their families will benefit in September 2010, and that number will just keep growing. We expect that up to 50,000 children would participate

the following year, and even more until 2015-16, which is our goal for full implementation. This measured approach is fiscally responsible, and it is important for the success of the program.

Full-day learning would be an investment in our children. It's an investment in Ontario's people, which is the most precious resource that we have. Studies have shown that the return on public investment for young children is at least seven to one. I think everyone here can agree that this is certainly an investment worth making.

Bill 242 is an important piece of legislation. If passed, it would provide us with a framework for implementing this transformational initiative. It would strengthen our education system and enhance our future workforce. It would give our children more opportunities and, of course, give their families more supports. It would bring teachers, early childhood educators and parents together as we work towards a better future for our children. It's the right thing to do for our children, for our families and for our entire province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to provide my comments to Bill 242, an act to amend the Education Act, that the minister and the member for Kitchener-Conestoga spoke of.

They both, in their addresses, talk about the excitement that they feel is coming because of Bill 242. However, I know there are some issues that even our member for Nepean-Carleton, Lisa MacLeod, brought up yesterday when it came to the issue of choice. She mentioned, in a question to the minister yesterday, the fact that she will be unable to have a choice to keep her daughter Victoria in the half-day program. In my own riding of Leeds-Grenville I've heard from a number of providers, including our local YMCA. I had a great conversation with their CEO, Sueling Ching, regarding their concerns about Bill 242. The fact is that the Y in our community has provided a wide variety of daycare centres, both within schools and at their own facility.

**0930**

They are very worried that this bill will limit their ability for partnerships and their ability to attract early childhood educators. The government, again, talks about excitement, but they're going a little too fast with this. There are some valid concerns that local Ys have. I'm certainly experienced with our local Y and the services they do. I helped raise some funds to allow people to get access to their daycare programs and to access recreation in our community, and I know that those groups have some extreme concerns about 242, about those partnership issues, and I really believe that they have an exceptional comment that the government should be addressing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I listened intently to the minister on her presentation. Once again, the government is praising themselves and heaping accolades on themselves, but



once again the government did not listen to the opposition members. Many of us have family members who are teachers and trustees and former trustees and heads of boards. In committee, once again, they did not listen to us.

The announcement commits a fixed sum of money to the creation of full-day kindergarten classes in Ontario. We've waited a long time for this. Many families will wait another five years. That wait time could put children behind, assuming that it will be rolled out in five years. Will the funding for the initial rollout be distributed equitably across the province, or will it go where the space is needed? Will the first programs be needs-based or just space-based? We are concerned that the class size of 26 is an average and that the class sizes may become too large, like many current grade 4 to 8 classes where there is no cap.

Charles Pascal called for an early childhood division in the Ministry of Education to develop and implement a coordinated policy around child care. This announcement stops well short of completely integrating the child care plans that Pascal put forward. We are still waiting for details of the actual form that the typical class will take. We want to see the actual distribution.

My wife was a kindergarten teacher. Even with 20 kids, it's a handful, even with an educational assistant. Now they're going to bump it up to 30. I don't think they have any idea what it is to take care of 30 children in that age group. I think it's going to be a bigger deal than they're anticipating, and they fall far short of what is needed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I'm delighted to rise to make a couple of comments about Bill 242. It's hard to hold back when you hear the opposition trying to struggle to find negatives about this. It's unbelievable. I spend a lot of time in schools, especially with grade 5s and grade 10s, and I get to speak to principals. There hasn't been one school that I've been to that hasn't praised us about this. This is world-renowned. Yes, there are growing pains. I met with my own Y, or one of the Ys that I represent in my riding, and they praised us; they wanted to work with us. At the end of the day, we are committed to working with them.

I just got a letter the other day from the Northumberland Y thanking our government for the amendments that we put in place to move those yardsticks. We listened. Is there still more work to be done? Absolutely. But outright criticism and trying to find those minute faults is not going to move the yardsticks. We're committed to moving those yardsticks. We're committed to having one of the best education ministries for youth.

The province of Ontario is being watched all over the world for our initiatives to move these yardsticks forward. To say what if and what if and what if—this is not a what-if world; this is a world where we're going to get it done. It's going to get done. Yes, it could be done quicker, but no other government even attempted it be-

fore. What did they do? They cut schools; they didn't repair schools. We're really making progress. I look forward to this piece of legislation moving through, because the kids need it, parents need it and our province needs it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** On Bill 242, it's interesting that in this time when we have record deficits, when Ontario is in have-not status, when we are trending into a deep hole of debt, the government brings out a bill that, of course, increases expenditures and debt. This is \$1.5 billion. I heard the member from Kitchener-Conestoga saying that this will provide for a better future for our children. Listen, when we saddle our children with such huge and uncontrollable debts and mortgages and they say that this is a better future for them, a better future to saddle our children with insurmountable debtloads and an economy that's in have-not status—and the Liberal government talks about patting themselves on the back, praising themselves. They are so excited that everybody loves this. They refuse to look at the facts of life.

I also want to mention the Liberal government talking about how "children will have access to." But they don't talk about the inability, the removal, the restriction of choice, as the member from Leeds-Grenville talked about. Other parties, the YMCA for example, will be excluded and not really engaged in this discussion. It's clear that this Liberal government believes that there is only one role for government, and it's every role; that there is no room for anybody else. There is no room for other choices. It is just—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The minister to respond.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm happy to have the opportunity to respond—and I thank those members of the Legislature who have offered their comments—because it has given me yet another opportunity to correct the record.

First of all, with respect to choice, parents have had and will continue to have choice about whether or not to enrol their children in a full-day early learning program. In fact, the law in Ontario does not require that children be enrolled in a school until six years of age, so there has always been that choice. That choice continues.

I would remind all people in Ontario that this is exciting. We're excited because parents have told us and economists have told us that this is a vision that many other jurisdictions are looking to emulate.

I also think it's important to clarify with respect to those very important community partners, the third party providers. We have listened to them and they will have a key role to play. Working with school boards, there will be an opportunity for them to continue to focus on what they've done so very well for, in many cases, a number of years, and that is to provide extended day wraparound services for six- to 12-year-olds in school locations. So this piece of legislation very much enables third party providers who have worked and who now see that they have a new opportunity, a new reason to look to forge agreements with their local boards.



I think I'm happy that I've had the opportunity to make those clarifications and to end on the note that what we are doing here is an investment in our future. This is an investment in the new economy, enabling students to be as successful as they can when they go to school. That's what full-day learning is all about.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

0940

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm pleased to speak to Bill 242, the Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010. We had the introduction of this bill on February 17 of this year, we had second reading on February 23, we completed the Standing Committee on Social Policy clause-by-clause review on April 12, and of course we are here today to participate in third reading. But I want to make it quite clear from the outset that, despite the fact that we had public hearings and despite the fact that, I would say, the majority of presenters were probably representatives of child care programs, the government did not listen. Those individuals who are currently providing care for children four to five years old will no longer, after a transition period which hasn't yet been clarified or defined, be in a position to continue to do that. I think that's important.

I think it's also important that we in the opposition tried to listen to the deputants who appeared before us. We did have three days of hearings. In fact, we had more people than we had initially thought that we might have, and we tried to accommodate them. We had many more people write in with comments.

Despite the fact that we had the hearings, there were no substantive amendments made to reflect that input. I would say to you that the amendments that were introduced by ourselves, the Progressive Conservative Party, or those introduced by the NDP, that reflected the pleas for change by deputants weren't accepted.

Sometimes you question the process, because we still have a bill that is going to amend the Education Act to provide for the operation of junior kindergarten and kindergarten on a full-day basis. Of course we know that that is going to begin this fall, 2010, in boards but in selected schools. The only schools that will be providing the program are those schools that, obviously, have the physical capacity to accommodate these children. There will be others who will not be the beneficiaries.

This bill will also amend the act to provide for the operation of extended day programs outside the hours of junior kindergarten and kindergarten. This is the initiative that is creating so much concern. It is those after-school programs for four- and five-year-olds which have been provided by the not-for-profit sector, like the Ys, in the province of Ontario that now are going to be offered, after a transition period, only by boards of education.

It's really unfortunate in this day and age, when we talk about working with our community, when we talk about the need for collaborative approaches and when I consider the fact that in our high schools we have set up co-op programs with the private and the not-for-profit

sector, that we're doing exactly the opposite here. We are going to duplicate what—we're going to put up the silos again, and we're going to destroy the collaboration that we have seen in our schools.

The bill goes on also to appoint early childhood educators to positions in junior kindergarten and kindergarten and extended day programs. These childhood educators are going to be working with the teachers. However, the government made an interesting amendment which now puts in place a bit of a change and says that in certain instances where numbers don't warrant, it won't be necessary to have an early childhood educator in the classroom.

That's basically what this bill does.

I would have to say to you, this Premier made a promise, and he is rushing into trying to implement a bill which may be well intended, and the principle could be supported. But we've never seen any clear implementation strategy for the rollout of this full-day kindergarten for our four- and five-year-olds. We have never, ever seen it.

In fact, we don't know what's going to happen over the course of the next five or six years. We don't know how quickly different boards and different schools are going to be able to offer the program. A lot of parents are going to be deprived of the opportunity, depending on what happens, so they can't make the plans that they need to make either.

Parents really are in the dark about when their school will or will not offer this program. I would say to you, currently teachers are in the dark and school boards are in the dark. We've heard comments from trustees, educators and administrators about the lack of information. In fact, I was quite surprised during the clause-by-clause hearings as to how little detail the government was able to provide when we asked questions, the lack of specificity and also the fact that we should just be quiet and we should just allow the regulations to take care of some of the concerns and the questions that we had.

Well, they're not our questions; they're the questions of the people in the province of Ontario, the people that are going to be impacted. Our job as the official opposition is to speak on behalf of the people who don't have a voice in this chamber. That's what we have done. For the government to say that everybody loves this bill—it's not the case. We only have to take a look at the summary of the presentations that were received when we did clause-by-clause. Here's one from Ms. Tennier:

"Research shows that children" aged three to five "spending more time in school is not beneficial...."

"Serious educational reformers know that regardless of how much schooling children receive, the effects of the home will always, always be much stronger, and that is why they know that the only solution is to empower those very parents in that home."

There are other comments here as well. This is not unanimous. We need to be respectful of those who might have differing views. That's what I haven't seen, that people are respectful and appreciate that there are



those—and I guess there must be differing research; I have not read it—who obviously do have concerns.

There's another one here: "Young children need more time with their parents, not less. Increased funding should be directed to parents and families to enable them to be at home with their youngsters at this critical time in their development."

You know what? It goes on and on and on. So we need to be respectful of the fact that there are people in the province of Ontario who don't necessarily agree with this approach. Those people need to be respected, and certainly not put down. We need to also recognize that there are those who will not be choosing full-day kindergarten for their children, because they do enjoy spending time with their children. They would like to have them home half a day. But as we've heard from my colleague who's with the Ottawa board, that choice is not being given to her. If she wants her child to go half-day, she will have to go to a school where it's offered half-day. Parents who don't want full-day are going to be inconvenienced, as are the young children. There is no choice, and Pascal did recommend that there be choice.

But what are some other of the concerns? I think one of the concerns is the fact that this program is set to be implemented in September. Those of us who are teachers or have been chairs of boards or Ministers of Education all know that it's not September that we need to worry about, it's June. In the educational system, all decisions for September and the next school year, 2010-11, are made before the end of June. I remember, myself, when I was chair of a school board, we only met once in July and we met once in August. I also remember that the schools were not open during the summer. It was the time when people did take their vacation, which I anticipate they'll continue to do. Basically, we have just a little more than two months to put the detail on what I would say to you is just a skeleton right now.

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I just want to emphasize how disappointed I was, in the committee, to hear the responses from the government that they really didn't have much more information in the way of specifics, that it was going to be left to regulation. That was certainly concerning.

So at this late date, we have almost no information as to how this full-day-learning program is going to be implemented in schools throughout Ontario, yet we've got parents who have enrolled their children. We're looking at the government announcing the second year of schools that are going to be providing the program, but we don't know much about the programs that are going to be offered, the curriculum or the staffing. We certainly don't know what the before- and after-school programs that boards of education are now going to have to offer are going to cost parents. There are many, many unknowns.

We're also hearing from school boards that without more specifics, without more information about costs, staffing and resources, they feel they're going to have to cut some of their other programs. We anticipate, and we've certainly heard from some who feel that their

special education program could suffer as a result. Then, of course, we have the whole sector of daycare providers who have now been told, "Your services are no longer welcome in the schools in the four school boards in the province of Ontario." So whether it's English public, English Catholic, French public or French Catholic, those people, in future, will no longer be able to provide before- and after-school care to children aged four and five, and we have people who have offered these programs in communities throughout this province for years and years. Suddenly, their livelihoods are being threatened.

The government talks about going through a transition period. We don't know if they'll be allowed to continue, if they have an agreement with the board, for one year, two years, three years or no years. Here you've got a small business owner who doesn't know what his or her business is going to look like come September 2011—or September 2010, this year. How can you plan? Because we know that once the four- and five-year-olds are removed from the not-for-profit private daycare operations, it's going to be more expensive, because the four- and five-year-olds have been subsidizing the infants and toddlers, and of course you've got to make changes to your facility in order to accommodate younger children.

So again, we have just over four months before school starts, but we have just over two months before the educational system effectively shuts down for the summer, and we have little in the way of detail. Whether you're a school board, whether you're an administrator, whether you're a teacher or whether you're one of these daycare operators, you really don't know what's going to be going on. Of course parents, then, are put in a position as well, because if they continue to access the daycare program, maybe they're going to have to pay more in the fall. Again, the question will be, can they afford these new, high daycare fees? So it impacts more than just the schools.

A lot of issues were raised in the committee. At times you felt that as you were asking questions—and I suspect Mr. Marchese would agree. Sometimes people felt as though they were being brushed off. They weren't being given answers, or we kept being told that the clarity is going to come in the regulations, the specificity is going to come in the regulations. But when we'd ask more questions—"When are you going to provide that? What is the number going to be?"—nobody was able to give us an answer. Again, I go back to the fact that the educational system shuts down in about two months.

The government has not been upfront with the opposition—and we represent the people in the province of Ontario—nor have they been with the people that currently have contracts with school boards: the daycare providers.

We've had a case here where obviously the Premier desires to be known as the education Premier. He's made an announcement, and, as I say, the principle is good, but why would you not take the time to get it right? You introduced a bill on February 17 of this year and you expect to roll the program out in September.



There was a time in education when people took the time to get it right and they would do pilot programs, maybe for a year or two years, to get the kinks worked out, to determine what the consequences might be, not just within the school but in the community. And here we have a government moving ahead, not providing any answers in the clause-by-clause debate, to us or to the public, not giving any specifics or explanations to the question, but telling us repeatedly that it would be in regulation. So that's where we are.

What were the main concerns that we heard when the deputants appeared before us? Everybody, probably, except for those that strongly disagree with this—and there are those, and there are many. In fact, I know somebody said that they didn't appear because they were concerned that the government was going to disagree with them and they didn't want to suffer that. But I would say to you that most people came in and said that the intentions are good; however, the execution is bad, and there is no clear implementation strategy.

There was an acknowledgment on the part of even these daycare providers, who are no longer going to be able to maintain the contracts with school boards, that they support the initiative. They support learning for four- and five-year-olds. But they really were concerned about the government's lack of consideration for the impact on them. They were concerned that there was no clearly articulated strategy for implementation.

They were also very concerned that the government really had not given consideration to the impact of the elimination of the not-for-profit sector from providing the before- and after-school program for four- and five-year-olds.

They were concerned as well about the fact that we were establishing parallel systems, a duplication of services. For example, under the government's proposal, you could have four- and five-year-olds, who are the responsibility now of the school board, and you've got these after-school programs in one room, and in another room, because the not-for-profits, such as the Y, are going to be allowed to continue to offer programs for six-to-12-year-olds—they're going to be next door. I'm going to explain that a little bit more later on. You're going to have duplication of services, and you're going to have two parallel systems trying to deal with two different age groups.

One of the main problems that our party has with this initiative is the cost of the program at a time when we have the highest deficit ever in the history of this province. We're not going to see the budget balanced for at least eight years. In fact, I think there's some skepticism as to whether it will happen then. The federal government is going to be balanced in five years, but you know what? This is going to be eight years.

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It's concerning to people when there are so many priorities. We have health, safety, social services and many, many programs competing for money. We have this massive deficit, as I say, the highest in the history of this

province. We don't see jobs returning quickly to the province. So there is concern about the cost of the program, which will be in excess of \$1.5 billion annually, and that doesn't include the renovations and the additions that are going to be necessary in order to provide the space to accommodate the students.

Another concern we heard was about inequitable access. Not all students are going to be accommodated the first year. Again, it's going to depend on year one or two, primarily on whether or not your school has the space. Some people are going to get what some refer to as free child care; other families will need to continue to pay for child care for these same students of the same age.

Another issue is the whole issue of class size. This is a government that was really proud of the fact that class size was going to be 20, but we now know that class sizes are going to be larger, and I guess that's okay.

We also heard from people who were concerned about the impact on special education programs, funding and the accommodation of those students within those programs.

There was also concern about the fees and how they might be different from one board or one part of the province to another.

There were some who felt that the program was not being introduced in accordance with the spirit of Dr. Pascal's recommendations.

Of course, there was some concern about the lack of parental choice and the fact that it didn't seem possible to opt for part time rather than full time.

Let's take a look at some of these issues in a little more depth. The people who probably are going to be the hardest hit by this initiative—and that's our job, to stand in this House and let the government know the impact and to make sure that we are accountable to those people who don't have a voice in here—will be the not-for-profits. This bill is going to have a very severe impact on Ontario's not-for-profit child sector.

As I said before, we heard from many stakeholders. In fact, I heard from them here in the clause-by-clause hearings, but I also heard from many of them who made the trek to Waterloo to meet with me in my constituency office or came to my office here. Some of these are small mom-and-pop operations. Some of them are a little larger operations. They operate in different school boards throughout the province of Ontario, but regardless, they are individuals who have been committed to providing the best child care possible for the children in the province of Ontario.

One of them who appeared, whom I did speak to, was a very highly successful, licensed daycare centre, and they were over 150 years old. Bill 242 totally disregards the contribution that they have been making to supporting our four- and five-year-olds in the province of Ontario. Without access to the four- and five-year-olds, many of these businesses will quickly become bankrupt, because it's the infants and the toddlers who have been subsidized by the four- and five-year-olds. You've got a very, very serious situation.



There was an interesting article about this issue in the *Hamilton Spectator* on April 1 by Lee Prokaska. He talks about the fact that these collaborative approaches between school boards and the not-for-profits are going to be destroyed. There is concern expressed. It talks about the fact that the new bill, for whatever reason, now is going to require that school boards directly operate these before- and after-school programs for children who are enrolled in the full-day junior and senior kindergarten. In fact, the new bill specifically prohibits school boards from partnering with local child care providers to offer this care for four- and five-year-olds. As I said, one operator, 150 years in the province—what a slap in the face: “You’ve been doing a great job, but suddenly we’ve come to the decision that only school boards can look after our children.”

So here we are. Why? Why could there not have been flexibility demonstrated by the government? YMCAs throughout the province of Ontario have been providing outstanding after-school programs for four- to 12-year-olds in our elementary schools. Now they will no longer be able to provide the care for the four- and five-year-olds. So they’ll be in one room, as I said before, but they will be able to for the six- to 12-year-olds, who will be in another room. Talk about duplication of services, additional costs, resources etc. It makes no sense. Why would you reinvent the wheel if people like the Y have been so successful all these years?

This collaboration has a solid track record throughout the province of Ontario, and suddenly we want to burden the school boards, many of whom, by the way, would prefer that these not-for-profits continue to offer the programs. But you’re now saying to them: “You set up the program; you create the program from scratch.” Talk about duplication, talk about increasing your costs when you’ve had a successful program already.

You have to take into consideration the fact that if that’s what happens, and if these child care organizations lose their four- and five-year-olds, the cost, as I said before, of the toddler and infant daycare is going to increase because they’ve been subsidized by the four- and five-year-olds. It’s going to make it more difficult for parents in the province of Ontario to be able to find affordable, good child care for their children under four years of age.

What are we going to do in the future? Are we now going to open up our schools and begin with infants so that they’re there all day long? I think that the government should have listened to the hundreds of submissions that we had on this issue and they should have backed off, according to the submissions, the majority of which wanted them to, and continued with what was in place. They could have tightened up the guidelines if they wanted to make changes, if they had some concerns about the partnerships, but why not continue? Why not have allowed the school boards that flexibility to continue to collaborate with the not-for-profits who were providing it? But, for whatever reason, it didn’t happen, and that is certainly a big concern and probably was the biggest concern we heard during the public hearings.

The other one, and I mentioned this before, is the unequal access to parents and children. The government says they’re going to roll the program out over five years, but who knows? The deficit is growing; the debt is growing; they have no plan to balance the budget yet. We’re not sure how the economy in this province will move, because people in this province are going to have less in the way of disposable income.

1010

We’re already learning that with the new energy initiatives this government has put in place, people can expect to pay about \$350, \$360 more per year. We know that with the HST, an average family of four will probably be paying about \$2,500 more per year. Folks, the public in the province of Ontario is being hit hard, and this is on top of the health tax that this government introduced right after they were elected in 2003, even though Mr. McGuinty had said, “I won’t raise your taxes.” So we’ve seen a series of additional taxes and fees introduced by this government, and then, on top of all of that, you have this initiative, and all of the costs that are going to be incurred.

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I hear the Liberals across the way; they obviously don’t care about the impact of the additional costs on people in the province of Ontario. But if you add that to the physiotherapy fees that people are now paying, because the government removed the coverage—they’re also paying their chiropractic costs, because the government took away coverage. There are many outpatient services that have been moved out of our hospitals that were publicly funded and that are now being funded by individuals.

You know what? The cost of living for people in this province has increased. In fact, I heard from one elderly lady who was beside herself because she was so concerned about the increased cost of the HST; she was concerned about the energy cost. She says, “I already don’t have any heat on in my upstairs. I only heat the room that I’m in. I turn off all my lights. I don’t use my dishwasher, because you know what? I don’t want to incur that cost. I do my washing, because I’ve heard about this time initiative,” which has caused people all sorts of concern. People are concerned. And then she said to me, “I think I’m going to have to give up my weekly trip to the hairdresser,” and she said, “I won’t have money to go to Tim Hortons.”

These are real elderly people who are reading in the paper about the increased costs of the HST; they’re reading in the paper about the increased costs of energy, and they’re concerned. We have to respect the fact that people are concerned—

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** As long as you tell them about the rebate, Liz.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** —about these issues, because the media—

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I’m not sure what the whole story is. Is there not going to be an increase in energy



costs? Is there not going to be an increase in HST costs? I think so.

Another key issue that we keep hearing about is the implementation plan, the fact that the government does not have one, not even for this year, not even for next year, and they certainly don't know where they are going to go for year three, four or five. We haven't seen the curriculum—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I think I've hit a nerve. I hear the opposition, and they probably recognize that there's some truth in what is being said.

We've got a program here, and as I say, most people did agree—many did agree, not all—that obviously the intentions were good. But there has been a real rush by the government to announce the program in February and get it up and running for the fall. As a result, there is a lot of analysis that should have been undertaken. There are unintended consequences that we're learning about now.

I haven't mentioned it, but these little kiddies are going to be bused to school; some of them are going to, obviously, have to walk to school. There are going to be lots of changes that need to be considered. It's probably the most major change that has ever happened in the history of education for a long, long time. We've only had a few months. The government just hasn't given it the due consideration and analysis that an initiative of this scope is requiring.

At the committee, all they could say was, when we had questions, "You know what? We're going to deal with that in regulation. No, we can't give you any specifics. No, we don't know when the regulations are going to be available." So the stakeholders are concerned because there's no detail. Obviously, we in the opposition are concerned on their behalf because there are no specifics and there just are no details as far as the implementation is concerned.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The time has elapsed. This House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would like all members to join me in welcoming a number of guests from Middlesex county who are here in the Speaker's gallery today, former wardens and family: Jack Baker, Marion Baker, Aubrey McCallum, Rose McCallum, Doug Reycraft—Doug was also a member of the 33rd and 34th Parliaments, representing Middlesex—Barb Reycraft, Karl Nevin, Joey Nevin, Joel Blackmore, Alan Marr, Sandy Marr, David McDonald, Barbara McDonald, Al Edmondson, Ellen Edmondson, Ian Brebner, Tom McLaughlin, Mary Ann McLaughlin, Joanne Vanderheyden, Wes Hodgson, Albert Bannister, Verlyn Campbell, Betty Crawford, Kathy Johnson, Verne

Johnson, Kathy Bunting, Charlie Corbett, Jim Maudsley, Linda Maudsley, Ron Crawford and Gene Crawford. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to introduce a family from my riding: from Coldwater, Ontario, Marlene and Chris Poiso, and their children, Nazira and Noah. They're in the members' gallery.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** On behalf of young Tudor Mititelu, a page from my riding of Ottawa South, I am pleased to welcome his mother, Corina, who will be joining us very shortly.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'm pleased to welcome, as they begin to file in, the students of John Fraser Secondary School on Erin Centre Drive in Mississauga. They'll be accompanied by their teacher, Heather Sinclair.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question to the Premier: Why has the number of assistant deputy ministers under your watch gone from 95 to 160 in six short years?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** What I can say is that we've worked very, very hard to run as efficient a government as we possibly can. I believe we are now running the second most efficient government in the country in comparison to our provincial counterparts.

My colleague knows as well that we have made a commitment to reduce the total number of public servants in our government by 5%, which we think is a significant reduction. It is ambitious, but we're convinced we can do this in a way that does not compromise the quality of the services that we're delivering.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, Premier, yesterday we indicated to you that the so-called transitional agency, the Ontario Power Authority, had grown by a staggering 1,900% under your watch. Clearly, they are taking their cues from the Premier himself.

Let me repeat those numbers, Premier: In just six years, the number of assistant deputy ministers has expanded from 95 to 160. This is close to the Premier. These are the choices, sir, that you make. You try to say that you suddenly got religion, that you're going to try to restrain spending, but why should anybody believe you when they see that kind of bloat in your bureaucracy?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to give you an example—I know that my honourable colleague stands against all government of any kind, but I think there are some important responsibilities assumed by our public servants. For example, one of those new assistant deputy ministers is the executive officer of the Ontario drug program. Based on that individual's advice, we are moving to lower drug costs in Ontario. I think that's a very important initiative that stands to benefit not just taxpayers, but those very many families who pay for their



drugs out of pocket. That's just one example of one individual who is helping us provide leadership with respect to a very important initiative that is going to bring drug costs down for Ontario families and for Ontario taxpayers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, Premier, the Ontario PC caucus believes in front-line public service that helps out everyday Ontario families. Clearly, the Dalton McGuinty government believes in growing the size of the bureaucracy. The number of assistant deputy ministers has skyrocketed. Your so-called transitional OPA is up some 1,900%, and what do families get? Cuts in their health care services and higher energy bills as a result.

Premier, what's truly happening here is that when your civil servants hit the upward bound on their pay grades, you simply reclassify them to assistant deputy ministers to increase their pay.

I'll ask you again: How can you look into the camera and tell Ontario families that you're looking for restraint when we see the size of this bureaucracy growing beyond proportion?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I want to reassure Ontarians that there's always more work to be done, but that we are now the second most efficient public service of all the provinces. We're 34% lower than the national average. We're reducing the footprint of the OPS by 5%. That's 3,400 employees, which will save us, on a permanent basis, \$300 million annually.

My honourable colleague says that he's in favour of government and public services, but I remember the days when we lost nurses on the Conservative government watch. I remember when we lost meat inspectors and water inspectors on the Conservative government watch. There's a reasonable place in which to draw the line. I am convinced that we can continue to do that to keep costs down but ensure that Ontarians benefit from the services they need to be able to count on.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: While you're growing the bureaucracy, sadly, you're laying off nurses in the province of Ontario. You're closing down emergency rooms in the province, and you're going to cut the services that neighbourhood pharmacists give to seniors and worried moms and dads across our province. Premier, we have a better idea in the Ontario PC caucus, to put the "public" back into public service. That's why my colleague, the critic for public accountability, Lisa MacLeod, is bringing forward her Truth in Government Act later today. It will extend freedom of information requests to all provincial public bodies. It will ensure that hospitality expenses and travel are posted online, and any contract of \$10,000 or more will be posted online. It will ensure that your practice of reclassifying bureaucrats at a higher pay grade must be seen by the taxpayers who pay the bill. Premier, will you support this act, and turn every Ontario family—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague says he's interested in transparency and accountability, and I think Ontarians will be interested in having an objective assessment of his intentions in that regard. I recommend to you the Guelph Mercury editorial of April 19. It's entitled "Hudak Didn't Tell the Whole Story." It says, "Ontario Progressive Conservative leader Tim Hudak spun an interesting web in a stunt in Guelph last week that was purported to show his party would 'improve transparency and accountability of the government.'..."

"It also turns out that the documents ... which Hudak relied upon ... offer no clear link to whether any of the recipients of the contracts are 'insiders' or 'Liberal-friendly,' as was asserted...."

Further, "The furious assertions weren't immediately bolstered by the documents that apparently gave rise to them...."

"The announcement was clearly torqued in an attempt to achieve maximum political impact."

I think we have to—

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Premier. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Quite frankly, what a sorry response from the Premier of Ontario. We're talking about accountability for—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. Start the clock. The member from Hamilton East knows he should be in his seat.

Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I think Ontario families are tired of a Premier who dismisses these good ideas to improve accountability and transparency in the way that tax dollars are spent, to turn every Ontario family into a watchdog of his government.

We don't need any lectures from this Premier, who saw \$1 billion leave the health care system in the eHealth boondoggle which lined the pockets of Liberal-friendly consultants.

Premier, if you truly care about transparency, if you truly care about accountability and this is not some last-minute conversion, will you support Ms. MacLeod's private member's bill, the Truth in Government Act, which puts these things online for taxpayers to see what you're up to?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to return to this editorial because it introduces objectivity, and I think it's important—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I can start warning members now. I don't prefer to do that, so I'd just ask that you tone it down.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague, just a moment ago in his question to me, again made



reference to eHealth and “lining the pockets of Liberal friends.”

I want to quote again from the editorial.

“It ... turns out that the documents ... which Hudak relied upon ... offer no clear link to whether any of the recipients of the contracts are ‘insiders’ or ‘Liberal-friendly,’ as was asserted at the event—and in press releases distributed in connection to it.”

It goes on to say, “The announcement was clearly torqued in an attempt to achieve maximum political impact. That’s an interesting play by a leader and a party vowing to deliver more openness and accountability....”

If we’re going to have a debate, then let’s have it on the basis of a factual foundation. That’s in keeping with what we owe, I think—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The only thing torqued here is the feeding frenzy of Liberal-friendly consultants like your friends at the Courtyard Group, who got fat and rich at eHealth, at the LHINs and, we suspect, across this bloated government.

Ontario families want to have truth in government. They want to have these accountability measures that the Ontario PC caucus is bringing forward: extending FOIs; posting online all contracts of \$10,000 a year or more and all grants and contributions of \$10,000 a year or more; and posting online these reclassifications that you’ve used to bloat the number of assistant deputy ministers by some 60%-plus in your time in office.

Premier, why do you stand against these real proposals to empower Ontario families?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The honourable member says he’s in favour of good ideas that promote accountability and transparency, so I’d ask him in return, when we put Hydro One and OPG on the sunshine list, why did his party vote against that? When we gave the auditor the power to look at the books before an election and discover any potentially hidden deficits, they voted against that. Why did they do that? When we expanded the powers of the Auditor General to include school boards, hospitals and universities, they did not support that. When we banned government advertising, they voted against that twice. When we made publicly reporting expenses mandatory, putting it online for 22 agencies, they voted against that.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, we learned that Rochester-based North American Breweries made a serious offer for Labatt’s Lakeport Brewery. The deal would have saved 143 jobs—good-paying jobs—in Hamilton. Labatt rejected the offer and they’ve started to dismantle the brewery’s equipment.

One of the Premier’s former senior aides is a key Labatt executive. Has the Premier had any conversations with him or anyone else at Labatt about the future of the Lakeport Brewery?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Thanks once again for the opportunity to address this, not just for us here in this House but for the people in Hamilton and, in particular, those who work at Lakeport. We recognize that they’ve begun to move—that Labatt, buying Lakeport, has begun to move equipment out.

We are committed to working with anyone who’s prepared to make investments in Hamilton. We are certain that there is a bright future, not just for those workers but for that facility. We are determined to see that that facility can be used for other purposes.

What we do know of Labatt, with their equipment, is that they will be putting that equipment to use in Canada. We don’t know the details of that. It is unfortunate they have moved quicker in terms of their planning than what we had anticipated.

We are as concerned as the member opposite that the people in Hamilton who work at Lakeport will have a future, and we will do whatever it takes to do our part—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The people of Hamilton want the Premier to respond to this very serious issue. We don’t want to hear platitudes from a minister who’s not doing her job.

The bottom line is this: The Rochester company wants to grow Hamilton’s export base, wants to do what this minister purports that she wants: They want to save 143 good-paying jobs in Hamilton. They’ve made a serious offer for the brewery and all of the equipment, but Labatt is refusing to accept that offer. They’re refusing to sell, even though the prospective new owner would not be a direct competitor in terms of local markets.

Will the Premier get on the phone with Labatt after question period, convene a meeting with them and help to broker a deal that will save those 143 jobs and save a brewery in Hamilton?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** What we know about Hamilton and what Hamilton wants is that they want a bright future with good jobs for the people who work in Hamilton.

What we know is that we have made significant effort and significant strides in investments by this government, and every one of those investments has been opposed by the members of the opposition, whether it was around infrastructure, hospital bills—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock—pardon me; no, leave it running. The member from Hamilton East will please come to order. If your leader wants to move your seat, then you’ll be sitting there permanently. If not, you should perhaps be in your own seat.

Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Shame on this minister. There are 143 families in limbo, and they are now scrambling to pay their bills. And shame on this Premier. Even though



there was a serious offer on the table to save the brewery and their jobs, these families are losing hope quickly. Meanwhile, the Premier rewards Labatt with a juicy, publicly funded tax cut.

Is this how the Premier plans to save Ontario jobs, by rewarding irresponsible corporate behaviour with even more tax cuts and by looking the other way as Hamiltonians keep losing their jobs?

**Hon. Sandra Papatello:** I have to say that it's quite ironic that every time we have come to Hamilton with investments, every time we've used programs from economic development and trade to help business to create jobs, the same member on her feet today has opposed those efforts. So I find it very, very ironic that today this member is suddenly supportive of our initiative—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That's a false statement. You're creating that. That's false.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order.  
Minister.

*Interjections.*

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** This is the final warning to the member from Hamilton East.

Please continue.

**Hon. Sandra Papatello:** Every initiative that we have made to be supportive of Hamilton, those same members have been opposed. What is very important today is, there are 143 people that are concerned about their future, and what we anticipate, like we have done before, is we will do whatever it takes and we will help those people.

## PENSION REFORM

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Premier. It's regarding a very prominent issue that's happening in the province; it's around pensions.

We know that at this point in time there is a serious discussion happening across the province. We saw articles recently in the newspapers about the fact that you have to earn a significant amount of money, \$1 million, if you expect to retire with a pension of about \$50,000 a year. You need \$500,000 if you want to retire with a pension of about \$25,000 a year. Yet, on average, Ontarians only save about \$60,000 in their RRSPs at the time of retirement. So the point is that Ontarians cannot rely on RRSPs alone to have a decent quality of life upon retirement.

The question is this: When will this government finally give Ontarians a public option to save and retire with dignity?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I thank my colleague for the question. This is something we've had a chance to speak to in previous question periods. I read the same article. It is nothing if not sobering in terms of where we find ourselves at this point in our history. The fact of the matter is that we are collectively and individually saving too little for our retirement years.

My colleague has settled upon a particular solution to the exclusion of others. I think that we need to take a bit more time. I think we've now engaged the federal government; I think they're now participating in a sincere effort to respond to a national challenge. We look forward to continuing to work with them. Among the many possible solutions that we are required to consider is the one put forward by my honourable colleague.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** According to research conducted for the hospitals of Ontario pension plan, 84% of Ontarians are concerned about having enough money for retirement and 58% believe that it's the role of government, not individuals, to ensure that Ontarians have an adequate retirement income. During this historic debate, you either support cost-effective public pensions, as New Democrats do, or you stubbornly stick to fee-heavy private individual savings plans that have been shown not to work. Will the Premier tell Ontarians who are worried about their retirement income: What does he support?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member opposite is aware that in our recent budget we outlined a number of options that are available to all governments, including an expanded public pension. I had the opportunity yesterday to meet in London with a number of labour leaders as well as business leaders at a national pension forum hosted by my federal counterpart, Mr. Flaherty. We again heard a range of options that are available to enhance retirement savings. Among the options under consideration is the one the member has spoken about. I've also had the opportunity myself to meet with a number of labour leaders on these important issues.

I'll be attending, with other finance ministers in June, the next national meeting to discuss the options that are available as we move to what I hope will be an even better—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This is a very serious issue for all Ontarians, who look forward to their golden years but dread the economic uncertainty that those golden years often bring.

In a few weeks, as the minister mentioned, Canada's finance ministers are going to gather to decide the future of retirement savings in this country. New Democrats support public, defined-benefit pension plans like our proposed Ontario retirement plan, and both the Premier and the minister have acknowledged that it is a very solid plan. But with the clock ticking down to the meeting, there's absolutely no sense at all as to where the McGuinty government stands.

The Premier can actually offer some clarity here and now, so I'll ask the question again: What is his position on pensions? Which side is he on?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We are continuing to examine a range of options. It could be a combination of those options.

We have engaged, for instance, Bob Baldwin, a noted economist who has very close ties to the labour commun-



ity, who advised us that there is a particular challenge among middle-income earners. His recommendations paralleled, interestingly, the recommendations of a more conservative prominent national economist on the same issue. There is a broad national discussion. I know that provinces like Nova Scotia and Manitoba haven't yet landed position on these things.

What's important is that all of us continue to work together. The member is right: There are challenges in the system, but I think all Canadians and all Ontarians should know that, overall, our system has served us well. We want to make sure that continues into the future.

#### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Premier. While the North East Local Health Integration Network is located in North Bay, the newly appointed CEO, Louise Paquette, resides in Sudbury. The position was posted as being located in North Bay. Will the North East LHIN continue having an absentee CEO, or are you planning to waste patient dollars on a special arrangement for Louise Paquette?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The North East LHIN covers northeastern Ontario, and northeastern Ontario includes all of northeastern Ontario. If the member opposite is suggesting that what we need to do is employ people who work only in one community in a very large area, then I have to respectfully disagree with that.

I am very pleased with the work that the North East LHIN is doing to drive the integration that is vitally important for the future of our health care system. I think the CEO of the North East LHIN is highly qualified to do the job, and I look forward to working with her as she takes this on.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What's her name?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Louise Paquette.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** This is just a perfect example of why this government's talk of restraint simply isn't credible. This government looked the other way while this LHIN handed out \$770,000 in untendered contracts to consultants. His government is paying Louise Paquette over a quarter of a million dollars, adding her to 11 others at the LHINs who have salaries on the sunshine list. Now it ends up that he has given his quarter-of-a-million-dollar CEO a special deal so that she doesn't have to report to work in North Bay, which is where the office is. Ontario patients are left to wonder what motivated the Premier to turn his back on all this talk of restraint.

My question is this: Is Premier McGuinty putting the Liberal family ahead of Ontario families because the new CEO's family donated over \$23,000 to the Liberal Party since 2004?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The attacks on giving community people a voice in their health care system

continue. I, for one, am extremely proud of the work that the LHINs are doing to integrate that care.

Let me give you just one example in the North East LHIN where having the LHIN there actually is improving patient care. The Espanola general hospital is a model of integrated care. The hospital serves a small, rural northeastern community with a population of approximately 5,000 people. This small hospital and small community was a finalist in the Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo in Toronto this past November. The Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre's natural bowel care program was one of three finalists in the improving quality and patient safety category. This innovative—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Housing. After almost seven years of the McGuinty government, Ontario families continue to face a housing crisis. Today's Toronto Star says that the affordable housing system is in a "sorry state." Three years ago, the McGuinty government promised to put forward a long-term affordable housing strategy. Today, we are hearing concerns that the plan "falls well short of what's required."

Will the government deliver a comprehensive and well-funded housing strategy this June, or is affordable housing considered expendable just like transit funding and the special diet allowance?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I know that all of us are anxious to see the final unfolding of the affordable housing strategy in the province of Ontario, but I also know that your colleagues in the New Democratic Party always want us to do things right, to give full consideration to all points of view. I know New Democrats don't want to rush into things and make mistakes.

1100

What I'm saying to the member is, we received over 1,000 representations from people. We had 13 excellent meetings where people could bring forward their ideas; people submitted ideas in writing to us. We are analyzing those at the present time. We're finalizing the package. I think the member, if she is objective, will actually applaud the policy when it's brought forward this spring.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The McGuinty government likes to spout off about what they're doing. I hope, quite frankly, having heard the minister just now, that all of that consultation will not be a waste.

At any rate, the consultation doesn't change the situation on the ground. This is what is happening in Ontario: 140,000 families are waiting for affordable housing; one in five households is paying more than half their income on rent; a quarter of a million families are forced to choose between paying rent and putting food on the table. Yesterday, the Housing Network of Ontario set out five requirements for an effective housing strategy,



including a commitment to build 10,000 new affordable housing units a year.

The question is, will the government's strategy actually follow their lead and take into account their recommendations?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I don't think the member would want me to pre-empt the official announcement of the strategy.

But let me tell you what we have been doing, outside of the strategy even. We're committed to creating and repairing at least 76,000 housing units across Ontario. We're delivering close to 35,000 rent supplements to help make rent more affordable for Ontario families. Our rent bank has prevented nearly 23,000 evictions so far. On average, this means keeping 330 families in their homes every month.

Through our agreement with the federal government we're investing \$622 million, and the federal government is matching that, for a combined total of \$1.2 billion for affordable housing; \$704 million of this was allocated for the social housing renovation and retrofit program. To date, we've seen \$260 million spent for repair—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I was happy to hear that this government expanded access to the cancer drug Avastin last year. This was good news for Ontarians fighting cancer who are in need of this particular drug. However, there are many other types of cancers that Ontarians are struggling with every day.

Cancer touches us all. It affects our parents, our children, our brothers and our sisters, and many of our loved ones and friends. We all need to rally together to fight the causes of cancer. I know that everyone in this House does.

Can the minister please tell the House about any other steps the government is taking to increase access to cancer drugs in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I know how important it is to patients and their families affected by cancer to have access to the right drugs. That's why we're proposing new drug reforms that will make it possible to continue to add new drugs to the formulary. That's why we're supported in these reforms by the Canadian Cancer Society.

Since 2003, we've funded an additional 39 cancer-fighting drugs. New funding means that the following cancer drugs have been added to the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary: Gleevec for chronic leukemia; Sutent for stomach and kidney cancers; Thyrogen for the treatment of thyroid cancer; and Nexavar for kidney and liver cancers. On top of the above-mentioned drugs, we've also spent almost \$500 million between 2007 and 2009 for intravenous drug uses.

This government is committed to increasing access to drugs for all Ontarians, and we will continue to achieve this goal through our proposed drug reforms.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I'm grateful to the minister for that answer, as myself personally and I know people in this place are affected by the cancers that we speak of. I look forward to passing this information on to the constituents in my riding. It shows that Ontarians stand to gain access to the many drugs we have in our new proposed reforms.

According to the Brant Cancer Report, which was released in January 2009, 646 cases of cancer were diagnosed in 2004. In Brant, as in Ontario, the average rate among males was significantly higher than females. Generally, four types of cancers explained half the rates of incidence in Brant: lung, colorectal, prostate and breast.

Could the minister please elaborate on any new specific drugs that are offered for these cancers that we can fight?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Lung, colorectal, prostate and breast cancer are among the most common cancer diagnoses in Ontario. That's why our government has taken action, and we continue to add important cancer drugs to the formulary. Our proposed drug reforms will increase the frequency of these additions and give Ontarians more access to lower-cost drugs.

On the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary, new funding means the following cancer drugs are now listed: Trelstar, for prostate cancer; Xeloda, for colorectal and breast cancer; and Tarceva, for lung cancer. As well, we're expanding the funding coverage of Femara and Aromasin for breast cancer—and many more.

These reforms are the right thing to do for all Ontarians, and this is the right thing to do for Ontarians who are fighting cancer.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, with 72 days left before your greedy HST tax grab becomes a reality for Ontario families already struggling to make ends meet, here's what Susan Stevenson of Wheatley has to say: "We cannot afford another tax. We can barely make our mortgage payments, then there is hydro, gas and all the other necessities we have to pay."

The member for Chatham-Kent-Essex hasn't asked this question, so I will: Will you scrap the HST on hydro, gas and all the necessities that the Susan Stevensons of the world and the people of Chatham-Kent-Essex will have to pay in just 72 more days?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I agree with the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex that what we need in this province is 600,000 more people working, and working in his riding. There is no more passionate member in this riding than the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex. What he has been telling his constituents is that there are two parties in this House who believe that we should have a 20th century taxation system while our kids need jobs in the 21st century.

So I say to all of the members that it is so very, very important that we keep our eye on the ball. What we need



in the 21st century are those jobs—the jobs we need for our children and our grandchildren—and we will reform our tax system to get those jobs. It's so important for the people of Chatham–Kent–Essex to understand that their income taxes are going down, and they need to file their income tax return to get the benefits of the tax reform—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I don't think Susan Stevenson or anyone else from down there would believe that either—if they've got a bridge to sell, maybe.

Susan Stevenson isn't the only one who doesn't believe her concerns are getting through to Dalton McGuinty and his government. Jodi Bryans of London knows the HST means everyday items like home heating oil, haircuts, gym memberships and gas at the pump will cost more. She says, "Taxpayers here are tapped out—you have all you're going to get."

The Minister of Health, the Attorney General and the member from London–Fanshawe could have stood up to the Premier for Jodi Bryans, but they didn't. So I will. With just 72 days left, Premier, will you scrap your greedy HST tax grab on every item?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** When it comes to London, there's a reason that the good people of London and the county—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** You could buy a job at the LHINs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Halton.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm telling Jack Brewer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not helpful, Minister.

Minister?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank the MPPs for London and, particularly, for Middlesex, who've been able to share with their constituents the fact that their income taxes were permanently cut on January 1. I know that they've been doing a wonderful job making sure that their constituents understand that there is transitional funding available—from the Harper government, I might add—to the vast majority of taxpaying families and singles in London and in Middlesex.

I would say that those members understand that, for a brighter future, we need to reform our ancient tax system and get it into the 21st century to make sure we're getting the jobs that the people in London and area, particularly in Middlesex, need, and that our farmers appreciate the fact that we are lowering their cost of business so they can be profitable.

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## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, you'll know that

last Thursday, the workers for the centre Jeanne Sauvé, which services kids' needs in regard to child protection services in the region, had a rally, along with municipal leaders and others, to protest the financial situation that your government has put these child protection services in.

My question to you is simply this: Will you admit that the budget adjustments made by your government this year have not resolved the budget crisis of centre Jeanne Sauvé and other child protection agencies?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to speak about this issue and talk about the transformation of a sector and the work that we're doing to stabilize and sustain child protection across this province.

We understand and believe in the important work that's done by children's aid societies. We also know that we need to work with them to make sure, because of the importance of that work, that they are on a sustainable pathway. That is exactly what we've done, and the member opposite knows this. We have worked hard in this past fiscal year to stabilize the sector to get us to the large-scale conversation with respect to the future of the sector and how we can find a way for child protection to operate and function amongst the many complexities that exist associated with the families and children that they serve.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, you're missing the point. It is your government and this Legislature that has mandated by legislation that these child protection service agencies must provide protection to children when in need. The issue is that they're having to lay people off because your government is not funding them to meet those needs that have been mandated by this Legislature.

I ask you again, are you prepared to do what needs to be done in order to address the financial crisis that exists within the child protection services, or are you going to do something else in order to meet with this particular issue?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I tell the member opposite—and he does know this—that we are absolutely prepared to do what it takes. We funded an additional \$26.9 million across the province to ensure that children's aid societies would be able to function and find a pathway to sustainability. In fact, Jeanne Sauvé Family Services received an additional \$199,000, in addition to those funds that they had received in the past fiscal year.

As we embark on a new fiscal year, we continue to work with the commission whose responsibility it is to find a sustainable pathway for children's aid societies. Our regional offices work in collaboration with those CASSs to ensure that they are able to deliver the protection that children need. That is why we've put additional resources into the sector: to ensure and meet our commitment that no child would be at risk, and we have—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## JOB SECURITY

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Our



government, like many other jurisdictions around the world, is only now beginning to emerge from one of the most difficult economic downturns in our lifetime. The economy is showing signs of improvement. People are going back to work, and production levels are moving up slowly.

But the people of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex are still concerned about returning to new employment and job security. In fact, job security remains a top concern for many people across the province who still worry that we aren't quite out of the woods yet. As a result of the recent global economic crisis, many of our constituents find that their confidence is still shaken.

Minister, what is our government doing to secure jobs in this province and to restore confidence for the people of Ontario, who are just now beginning to see signs of a recovery?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm very pleased to take this question from the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. It is important, in particular in southern Ontario, where such a big base of our GDP is manufacturing, which is the sector that took the biggest hit in the global recession. We know that there are communities, cities and towns that were very much affected in a negative way. We are starting to see Ontario re-emerging as a leader in the nation with our GDP growth, every quarter now, going in the right direction with those indicators.

We know that there is more work for us to do. Today we're facing a dollar that's 98.8 cents against the American dollar. Those challenges still remain for that sector. Programs like our advanced manufacturing strategy, advanced back in 2005, were launched at exactly the right time, where the Ontario government could partner with these companies to bring them investment into—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** In her response, I noted that the minister highlighted at least one of the ways in which our government is acting to protect jobs, increase job security and strengthen our economy. The minister referenced a total amount of \$500 million for the AMIS fund.

While things are on the mend in our province's economy, it is important for the government to demonstrate where public monies are being spent and how investments are benefiting Ontarians.

Could the minister provide the House with a few examples of how these funds are being utilized to benefit the people of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and Ontario, and how your ministry is putting taxpayers' dollars to work to benefit them, their families and the province as a whole?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I had mentioned the advanced manufacturing strategy, which is a loan program that we have had in the past. Those are programs that have worked for communities.

A city like Hamilton: Karma Candy accessing a loan to make a significant investment in a historic part of Hamilton.

In this member's own riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex: seeing Precismeca in Wallaceburg creating over 100 jobs by having a small loan from our government leveraging a huge investment.

Last Friday in Sarnia: Nova Chemicals, H.C. Starck—both of those companies making significant investments in their community.

People are starting to see that things are starting to move again, that we can be hopeful. The Ontario government, with significant, good tax policy, will help our companies re-emerge and take on the world.

## USE OF TASERS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

You're aware that the policing community is extremely disappointed in you for not providing a program to train and equip all front-line officers with taser technology. You even said yourself that tasers save lives, and then, in what seems to be almost comical, you suggested equipping tasers with video cameras to spy on the few officers who do carry tasers.

Minister, can you explain to the House how equipping a taser with a video camera would improve law and order in Ontario? Or do you simply not trust our front-line men and women?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** That truly is a bizarre question. The placing of cameras was a suggestion—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Halton will withdraw the comment.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Withdraw, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The suggestion of mounting a camera on a taser is an operation that's used in some jurisdictions—and when asked in the question, would I look at it: of course.

What is important with our study of tasers is that we have implemented all the recommendations from the committee that studied tasers. That was made up of the police standards advisory committee, which is made up of the Police Association of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** The police officers want equipment and training, not video cameras.

Minister, you want to be Big Brother and look over the shoulder of the few people who are trained to carry a taser. I have mentioned your joke to many front-line administrative officers over the past few weeks. They simply cannot believe that you would even comment on such foolishness.

The OPP tell me that you will not provide funding for a valuable justice program like video cameras in police cruisers, which is very successful in many jurisdictions, but you have the gall to suggest something as pathetic as



being Big Brother while equipping a taser with a video camera.

Minister, why do you no longer have respect and confidence in the men and women who protect Ontario and put their lives on the line for us 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Let's be perfectly honest: If anybody in the policing community is laughing at any comment, it's his comment, because this government has demonstrated over its life that it supports policing, that it invests in policing, that it hires police officers, not on a five-year basis but on a permanent basis. And that's what we ask him to do—we ask him to talk to his public safety minister in the federal government to support the continuation of the federal program, not for five years but for the life of the program.

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There is absolutely no question that I will put our record of support for policing against his and their record of policing any time, anywhere. Any suggestion to the contrary is completely erroneous.

### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Later this week, I'll be in the Timiskaming area, in Marathon and Thunder Bay. Families in these communities have been hit very hard by the forestry crisis. Five years ago, the government promised \$500 million in forestry sector assistance. A freedom-of-information request submitted by my office found that \$236 million, nearly half of that fund, sits unused. My question is this: Why do hundreds of millions of forestry dollars sit in a Toronto bank account while families in northern Ontario continue to lose good jobs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I certainly look forward to seeing the leader at our Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association meeting in Marathon as well. Let me tell you that I will be there along with some of my colleagues. We look forward to being able to speak to them about the good news that came out of the Ontario budget of a couple of weeks ago that obviously has been received extremely well in Thunder Bay, northwestern Ontario and all across northern Ontario.

In terms of the forest sector initiatives, I think the member knows very well that, indeed, we have made significant incentives to the forestry sector that have helped keep mills open, that have helped reopen other ones and that will be able to put us in a position to help others as we go through these challenging times.

The fact is that we've uploaded costs to the province that previously were part of the responsibility of the companies. This party actually brought those responsibilities down to them. We look forward to bringing forward more incentives, including the wood supply competition that's going—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm going to actually share the FOI information that I have with the Premier and his minister and ask a page to bring it over to the minister, because, notwithstanding what he says, he should know very well that in Thunder Bay region alone, nine paper machines have been closed.

Not only were hundreds of millions of dollars left untouched as job losses decimated forestry communities in the north; this government refuses to provide a complete list of the companies that have actually received the public money. Large parts of that list, large parts of the information that we've requested, are simply blacked out. Why is the Premier hiding the details of \$180-million worth of government grants and loans?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** The facts are very, very clear. Overall, Ontario's forest sector programs under our government, which are unprecedented and were never done previously, have leveraged more than \$870 million in new private sector investments, a huge amount—through our forest sector prosperity fund, \$205 million; our loan guarantee program, \$141 million; the northern pulp and paper electricity rebate system, \$94 million going directly into the pockets of the companies; and how about the \$296 million in road construction maintenance that was uploaded back to the province; stumpage relief, which is obviously hugely significant to them as well; and forest inventory funding that has gone forward—there is example upon example.

Again, we are also looking at new opportunities through the competitive wood supply process. That application process closed on March 31. We look forward to putting Ontario's wood to work, and I know there's tremendous enthusiasm all across northern Ontario.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. People in Ontario are facing growing challenges as a result of the economic recession worldwide. In my community of Mississauga South, I've seen first-hand the challenges families are facing. This government has made great strides in improving the social assistance system—everything from raising rates to making necessary rule changes. However, we cannot stop there.

As part of the poverty reduction strategy, it was announced that the social assistance system will be reviewed. Minister, could you inform the Legislature and Ontarians as to the progress of the social assistance review?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I want to thank the member from Mississauga South for his question. As part of the poverty reduction strategy, I have appointed a Social Assistance Review Advisory Council, chaired by Gail Nyberg of the Daily Bread Food Bank. I am proud to say that we will be implementing a number of changes as a result of short-term recommendations from the Social Assistance Review Advisory Council.



Initial policy work will focus on the exemption of small payments and in-kind gifts, shortening the suspension periods for non-compliance with participation requirements, clarifying the rules for disposing of assets in relation to eligibility and changing the shelter allowance calculation to potentially benefit people who share the cost of their accommodations.

I'd like to thank SARC for their continued support. I am looking forward to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I know that people in my community appreciate the continued commitment to increasing social assistance rates. In fact, it was one of the recommendations made at two community round-table meetings that we held in South Mississauga during our government's public consultations on poverty. I was pleased that as part of our poverty reduction strategy, social assistance rates were raised again this year by 1%—that's 12% since taking office—despite the economic downturn.

However, this is only part of the answer. Ontarians don't need just short-term changes, but changes that will help people overcome barriers in the long term and give them the tools to get ahead in life. We have an opportunity, with the social assistance review, to provide and help provide those tools.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, is the Social Assistance Review Advisory Council examining the overall social assistance system, and if so, what are they looking to address?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I refer the question to the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak to this issue. I thank the member from Mississauga South for being such a strong advocate.

He is right: The social assistance review is one part of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. We do know that people need both short-term relief—and those are the steps that are being undertaken—and long-term strategies to improve life for them and their children.

I want to give just a few examples of the work that we are doing to make progress for individuals: \$63.5 million in funding to child care, maintaining 8,500 child care spaces; increases in the Ontario child benefit; our comprehensive tax reform will remove 90,000 low-income families from the tax rolls; full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. All of these things, and much more, are part of changing the future of Ontario families for the better. It's something that we're very committed to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. A special purpose account was established so that all licence fees, royalties and fines collected under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act were to be used exclusively for fish and wildlife

management. Every year, an annual report must be completed for the fish and wildlife special purpose account, yet no report has been given to this Legislature in the past two years. Minister, why have these reports failed to be tabled?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'm grateful for the question and I thank the member. This is an important issue. Certainly, it has been part of the briefing documents that I have been subject to in the last few weeks. I look forward to tabling those documents in the near future for the member and for all of the members in the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Minister, a letter from the previous Minister of Natural Resources, the member from Etobicoke Centre, to Mike Reader of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters on January 5 of this year says that both reports have been completed, but they still haven't been tabled. The letter goes on to say that the reports are expected to be tabled shortly. Minister, that was three and a half months ago and counting. These reports do not become public documents until they are tabled. Why is it that the ministry and you have failed to table these reports, and what is it exactly—or potentially appears to be—that the Ministry of Natural Resources is trying to hide?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I thank the member for the question and I appreciate his interest in this subject. Certainly, I have been looking at those documents and have directed my staff to table those documents. A letter is on its way to the Clerk, Deb Deller, as we speak, I believe. I'm happy to provide those documents and I appreciate his interest in the subject.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Toronto East General Hospital is a huge part of my community. As a result of this government's lack of commitment to excellent, quality health care, the hospital has closed the physiotherapy clinic and has announced the layoff of 118 nurses. Now, one of my constituents, who suffers from advanced arthritis and is a volunteer leader of our local arthritis management program, has informed us that the hospital will be forced to charge a \$480 fee to the Arthritis Society to run its arthritis self-management program.

Many people in my community living with arthritis benefit from the program. Participants learn to manage their arthritis and require less medical attention.

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Why has this government forced our hospital to stop investing in community-based health education?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome the question from the member regarding Toronto East General Hospital. I think he might be interested to know that we've increased their base funding by \$33 million since we were elected in 2003. In addition to that, they've received funding to reduce wait times, and an additional almost 19,000 procedures have been funded by this government.



In addition, we've put over \$75 million in the Toronto Central LHIN for our aging-at-home strategy.

When it comes to the physiotherapy services the member referenced, I'd like to quote the CEO, and I will do that in my supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The question to the minister is, why is this hospital being forced to charge people to use the facilities?

We know that both the Arthritis Society and the diabetes society run self-management classes at Toronto East General Hospital. It is obvious that these classes help people manage their conditions and that this results in less need for costly medical intervention. This is a no-brainer or should be a no-brainer. Educational programs help reduce health care costs in both the long and short term and keep people healthy.

Why is this government forcing Toronto East General Hospital to start charging for space to hold these important classes that help people stay healthy?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Our hospitals have had to make some very difficult decisions as they have come to realize, as have we, that the year-over-year increases in funding simply are not sustainable. Hospitals across this province are working hard with their LHINs to land on the changes they have to make.

When it comes to physiotherapy, Rob Devitt, CEO of Toronto East General Hospital, says there are 10 OHIP-funded clinics in the community and another 15 private clinics, all of which have shorter wait-lists than the Toronto East General Hospital has. So, really, this is a case of streamlining the system. These are the kinds of choices that hospitals are making.

For those of us who think that having a sustainable health care system is an important goal and responsibility, frankly, that we have, I think they will welcome this kind of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Until the late 1990s, elk were an extirpated species in Ontario, one that was not found in the province but still found elsewhere. It's my understanding that, starting in 1998, your ministry, with partners around the province, introduced elk from Elk Island National Park in Alberta to four locations around the province.

The program is now 10 years old and some elk populations have begun to thrive to the point that there has been conflict between elk and humans, specifically in the agricultural community. I know that in some areas of the province, especially, I'm told, in the Bancroft area, the problem has become quite acute.

What is the status of the repatriated elk herds and how is your ministry responding to the incidence of human-elk conflict?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I want to thank the honourable member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan for the question. The elk restoration program is something that all Ontarians should be proud of. It represents a success story and an example of what conservationists, hunters and the government can do when we all work together.

The four sites where elk have been reintroduced around the province have been seeing differing trends of population growth, and the herd around Bancroft has seen some population growth. That being said, the best estimate of the total population in the province is just over 700, compared to the hundreds and thousands of deer in Ontario.

The honourable member is correct to point out that the emerging success of the elk restoration program has come with a new set of challenges. Ontarians are pleased that elk have begun to establish themselves in the province. However, they've become a nuisance, especially in the agricultural sector.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** My question is once again for the Minister of Natural Resources. It appears that the unintended consequence of the success of the elk reintroduction program is difficulties for farmers and landowners in some areas of the elk range.

Elk are an important part of Ontario's biodiversity, a natural resource to be managed sustainably for the enjoyment of all. That being said, how did the government hear of this problem, and is the government listening to the people on the ground? What steps, if any, has the government taken to address the concerns of farmers while encouraging the further growth of the elk population?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** The honourable member is correct: When farmers are experiencing crop damage, clearly we need to work with them to find a community-based solution.

I've spoken about this issue with a number of conservation groups, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, affected farmers and ministry scientists. The Ministry of Natural Resources has been working with farmers in the Bancroft area to assist them in finding constructive elk control techniques. We're also completing the first stage of public consultations on the draft elk management plan. The plan is consistent with the direction set out in the cervid ecological framework and explores all options for habitat requirements, population sustainability and managing human-elk conflict.

I look forward to reporting further on this matter to my colleagues here and to the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1136 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Dave Levac:** In the members' gallery—and soon to join them—are members from the Ontario Chiropractic Association. Today, they are visiting us all. I'd



like to introduce Dr. Bob Haig, Dr. Tom Isaacs, Dr. David Brunarski, Dr. Melanie Locke, Dr. Warren Keyes and Anne-Marie Quinn, who today will be talking to all members and having a reception this afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to welcome, on behalf of the member from Scarborough—Agincourt and page Khaleel Rajwani, his father, Moez Rajwani, who will be joining us today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm privileged to rise today on behalf of the PC caucus and recognize the 62nd anniversary of Israel Independence Day.

The state of Israel was established in 1948 as a result of the British mandate granting Lord Balfour permission to establish a Jewish nation-state. It was established with a written constitution which granted equal rights to men and women, regardless of ethnicity, religion, race or creed.

After 62 years of wars, attacks, celebrations and developments, Israel and the Israeli spirit remain strong and vibrant. Israel remains the only democratic nation in the Middle East that does not subscribe to theocratic practices.

Its citizens come from all walks of life. Always open and accepting, Israel has welcomed those from former Soviet countries and African nations, amongst others. Israel, apropos of a current Toronto debate, is the only Middle Eastern country that affords equal rights to gays and lesbians.

It is making significant developments in the medical, environmental and agricultural fields. For example, Israel has developed a plastic recycling technology that is more efficient than current standards. It is highly advanced in the high-tech sectors with institutions like Technion university, IDC Herzliya and the Hebrew University.

The spirit and tenacity of Israel and its people are evidenced by the fact that they have taken a physically small body of land and turned it into a thriving nation. It is a modern-day miracle.

While we celebrate this anniversary of Israel's independence, it is important to recognize that while Israel has made many advances, there is still more work to be done to ensure that its past successes are not marred by terrorism and the hatred of those who call for the elimination of a Jewish state.

### NORTH YORK GENERAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm very happy to recognize today North York General Hospital in my riding of Willowdale for receiving the highest level of accreditation from Accreditation Canada. Accreditation Canada is a non-profit, independent organization that acts as an

external review for health organizations to assess their individual levels of quality, based on national standards. North York General's results were more than impressive, meeting 100% of applicable requirements in the area of infection control. The award is a testament to the hospital's high standards and reputation of excellence in patient care, safety, and quality improvement. To quote North York General Hospital president and CEO Bonnie Adamson, "Our top priority is to provide safe, quality care to our patients and their families—I am very proud of our staff, physicians and volunteers, who work hard each and every day to accomplish this."

I'm proud to be from a riding that has such an outstanding facility. Although already a great success, North York General continues to embrace opportunities for future improvements. Patients and their families should take comfort in this achievement. It demonstrates the priorities of North York General, being focused on an ultra-safe environment providing the highest-quality care.

Again, I congratulate North York General Hospital on this achievement. They will continue to provide outstanding health care in the North York area and the GTA.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Earlier today I was joined by Kevin Gaudet, the federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, and Peter Coleman of the National Citizens Coalition. They're here in the gallery today. We discussed government accountability, and they helped me unveil the PC five-point plan for truth in government.

Later this afternoon, I will table legislation that will include five robust accountability measures that will aim to restore public trust and confidence in Ontario's government and will shed some sunlight into some of the darkest corridors of political power here at Queen's Park and throughout our government. The legislation contains a series of taxpayer protection measures that will expand freedom of information across the government. It will ensure that at public sector bodies, proactive disclosure of hospitality and travel expenses, job reclassification, and contracts and contributions over \$10,000 are all fully disclosed.

These five points, had they been law, would have likely prevented scandals and taxpayer abuses at eHealth, the OLG and other government agencies. They would have also prevented the scandal at the Minister of Citizenship's office that ended with an Auditor General's report that uncovered a cricket club receiving \$1 million when it had asked for \$150,000.

If this bill becomes law, it means that the secretive LHINs and the tax-raising Waste Diversion Ontario will be accountable to the public. I'm calling on all members of this assembly to support this common-sense, practical and sensible bill.

## EARTHQUAKE IN TIBET

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I would like to express my heartfelt condolences for the tragic loss of lives in the



devastating earthquake in Kyegundo, Kham, Tibet. Many media outlets are reporting the earthquake as having taken place in the Yushu prefecture in the Qinghai province of western China. I would like to recognize that the earthquake took place in the eastern Tibetan province of Kham, Tibet, not China. The official death toll is reported to have reached over 2,000, with over 12,000 injured and 100,000 homeless. My riding of Parkdale–High Park has the largest Tibetan community in exile outside of Nepal and India.

I applaud the swift action of the members of the Tibetan community of Parkdale–High Park in the relief efforts, by raising funds and offering prayers for the victims and survivors of the disaster. Just days ago, a heartfelt letter from Tibetans in Kyegundo was sent to China's leaders, requesting that the Dalai Lama be allowed to visit the area. The Dalai Lama released a statement expressing his wishes to visit the earthquake-affected areas and offer comfort. The people of Kyegundo are deeply religious, and a visit from the Dalai Lama would ease much of the suffering.

Notwithstanding this tragedy, the strength of spirit of the Tibetan people in my riding continues to be a sign of endurance of the human spirit. I stand with all Tibetans at this time of great sadness and offer my support and my prayers.

#### TREE PLANTING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Each spring, Peter Orphanos, chair of the Sierra Club of Peel, invites me, along with other members of the western Mississauga community, to participate in the Earth Week tree planting in various parks and green spaces in western Mississauga.

1510

This year I joined with the Credit Valley Conservation organization, the Sierra Club members, the city of Mississauga and other community environmentalists, who either didn't want to sleep in last Saturday or who didn't mind the wickedly cold weather. They planted trees at the Meadowvale Conservation Area to extend the wooded area by the Credit River to permit better animal migration.

Visitors can see birds of prey searching for food along the Credit River and spot remnants of early settlements and farm ruins scattered throughout the conservation area. The nearby Meadowvale Village is an Ontario heritage site.

In previous years, hundreds of trees were planted in Streetsville Memorial Park, on the banks of the Credit River in north Mississauga and also along the Culham trail. Trees not only stop soil erosion, but they permit shade in the river. They allow the river to stay cool, and they allow the Atlantic salmon to migrate back up the Credit River in order to spawn.

I congratulate the Sierra Club of Mississauga, and I certainly congratulate Peter Orphanos on his ongoing terrific work on behalf of environmentalism in western Mississauga.

#### TOBACCO GROWERS

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Last week we learned that the federal, provincial and territorial governments entered into a civil settlement agreement with tobacco manufacturers JTI and RJR to resolve potential civil claims related to the movement of contraband tobacco in the early 1990s. This is the second time this government has received the so-called "tainted tobacco money."

Tobacco farmers are the hardest hit by the contraband trade, and this \$71-million windfall belongs in the hands of tobacco farmers. My question: When can farmers expect an announcement to this effect?

When the previous \$1.15-billion settlement was reached in 2008, the federal government used part of the funds for the tobacco transition program to eliminate quota. Although the province also received cash from the tobacco companies, it didn't provide the traditional 40% share usually provided for agricultural programs.

Last week, this government's ag minister called on the federal government to provide money for cash crop, beef, hogs, hort, veal and other programs, along the traditional 60-40 split.

I ask why this government's ag minister believes that income stabilization and the 60-40 split is good for some and not for others. If Ontario is demanding that the federal government come up with 60% for cash crop and cattle, why aren't they demanding the 40% for tobacco?

#### VISION HEALTH MONTH

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I rise today to bring to the attention of this Legislature the upcoming Vision Health Month. The CNIB is celebrating Vision Health Month in May 2010 to raise awareness about the importance of safeguarding vision health.

More than 800,000 Canadians are living with significant vision loss, half of them in Ontario. An additional 4.25 million Canadians have some form of age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma or cataracts, and if left untreated most of these people will be at risk of significant vision loss.

Regular eye exams are the best form of early detection and prevention, improving the chances of detecting any of the four major eye conditions early enough to help control and treat the disease.

CNIB passionately provides community-based support, knowledge and a national voice to ensure Canadians who are blind or partially sighted have the confidence, skills and opportunities to fully participate in life.

All of us need to take steps to protect our eyes. This includes wearing sunglasses. On May 27, all Canadians are being encouraged to wear sunglasses in support of Vision Health Month. I will be wearing mine, and I encourage everyone to participate and show their support.

#### ONTARIO CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION

**Mr. Dave Levac:** It is indeed a pleasure to rise in the House to offer a warm welcome to the representatives



from the Ontario Chiropractic Association who are with us in the Legislature today, and indeed in the House, as I introduced earlier.

It might interest you to know that the Ontario Chiropractic Association represents approximately 3,000 of the province's practising chiropractors. As accomplished health professionals who deliver care to over 1.2 million patients in the province, chiropractors provide diagnostic treatment and preventive care for disorders related to the spine, the pelvis, the nervous system and joints.

OCA members are committed to educating patients and the public about their health while empowering them to make informed decisions about treatment options and their overall wellness.

For the second year running, groups of chiropractors will be meeting today with MPPs and government officials to talk about the contributions made by the profession to the health care system and share experiences from other various constituencies. Of course, it would not be a Queen's Park day without the Ontario Chiropractic Association reception for all MPPs and staff.

A number of the OCA's members have travelled from ridings from all across Ontario and are here today to let us know that they are making a difference for patients living in our communities and for their wellness. I encourage each and every member of this House to attend the reception the Ontario Chiropractic Association is hosting here this evening in the legislative dining room from 5 o'clock until 7 p.m. so that you can meet with the representatives from your riding.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I hope to see you there, Speaker, and I hope those people heckling will be there, too.

### ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** On behalf of Premier McGuinty and my colleagues, I rise for the purpose of recognizing an historic event that took place 62 years ago: the establishment of the state of Israel. It is the fulfillment of prophecies, prayers and dreams. On this festive occasion, all of us join in the hopes and prayers of Jewish people here and in Israel that the day may not be far off when the people of Israel and the nations of the world lay down their arms, turn their swords into ploughshares and realize the word of peace, "shalom."

Israel may be a small dot on the map of the world, but it is a giant model of democracy. In spite of economic hardship, wars and threats of war, Israel has not lost its sense of purpose: to shine as a beacon of freedom, democracy and fulfillment of the promise of the ancient Hebrew prophets.

In 1986, as Minister of Citizenship responsible for multiculturalism, I had the pleasure of proclaiming Israel Independence Day on behalf of our government for the first time. I wish to acknowledge today the touching letter we received from the Vice-Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, the late Yitzhak Shamir, recognizing the significant gesture of friendship of the people of Ontario to the people of Israel.

One hour ago, we hoisted the Star of David outside this chamber. I wish to recognize the presence of the Consul General of Israel, Amir Gissin; Alan Winer of the UJA of greater Toronto; Dr. Leon Genesove of B'Nai Brith; Len Rudner of the Canadian Jewish Congress; and the president of the Canada Christian College, Dr. Charles McVety. I wish to say to them shalom and congratulations.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated April 20, 2010, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### 962 BLOOR STREET WEST LIMITED ACT, 2010

Mr. Ruprecht moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr29, An Act to revive 962 Bloor Street West Limited.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

### TRUTH IN GOVERNMENT ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR LA VÉRITÉ AU SEIN DU GOUVERNEMENT

Ms. MacLeod moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to provide for the disclosure of financial information in the public sector / Projet de loi 39, Loi prévoyant la divulgation de renseignements financiers dans le secteur public.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** This bill applies to certain specified entities in the public sector. It requires those entities to make disclosure of the following information on a quarterly basis: contracts that it enters into for goods



or services other than services provided by employees for a total value of \$10,000 or more; grants that it agrees to make of \$10,000 or more; expenses for travel and hospitality incurred in the course of carrying on its activities; and reclassification of any position of any of its employees or persons whose services it retains. A public sector entity is required to make the disclosure on a website that it maintains on the Internet.

1520

The bill also amends the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to make the public sector entities to which the bill applies institutions within the meaning of the act.

### GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

Mr. Yakabuski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities / *Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun à l'égard des remboursements de la taxe sur l'essence similaires consentis aux municipalités par le ministre.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short explanation?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The bill amends the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act. If the minister, under section 116 of the act, enters into an agreement with a municipality to provide a rebate of tax under the Gasoline Tax Act to the municipality for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating a rapid transit or public transportation system, the minister shall not refuse to enter into an agreement to provide a rebate of tax under that act to any other municipality for a purpose related to public highways under the jurisdiction of the latter municipality. The amount of the rebate that the latter municipality receives shall be based on the number of inhabitants in the municipality and the total distance of public highways under the jurisdiction of the municipality.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** April 18 to 24 is National Volunteer Week. We set aside this week each year to

celebrate the more than five million Ontarians who generously give their time to make a positive difference in their communities. Ontario has a long tradition of volunteerism, and the contributions of volunteers have been vital to the growth, prosperity and cohesiveness of our communities.

Volunteers built our early education system, many of our early hospitals and our first fire departments. Today, they run breakfast programs, drive seniors to appointments, coach our sports teams, help tutor our newcomers, support our vulnerable and protect our environment.

The work of volunteers holds our communities together and makes them resilient in the face of adversity. And today, volunteers are as diverse as the people of Ontario. They are part of our families, they are our co-workers, and they are our neighbours. Through their selfless actions, they help us to reach our full potential, and in doing so, they make communities all over Ontario better places to live.

The value of Ontario's volunteers was never more evident than in the past year as our province, along with the rest of the world, faced an economic downturn. But in this trying time, volunteers were prepared and ready to help, and they did.

Each and every Ontarian benefits immeasurably from the assistance that volunteers provide.

The McGuinty government applauds these volunteers and is committed to supporting and encouraging them. This government's recent budget demonstrates our on-going commitment to Ontario's volunteers by allocating \$120 million to charitable and not-for-profit organizations through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, to help build strong, vibrant communities.

The government is celebrating volunteerism through the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards. Since its inception, we have recognized more than 100,000 volunteers. This year, we will honour 10,000 more in 47 ceremonies in every corner of Ontario.

The government is also promoting volunteers through the third ChangeTheWorld Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge. This program is an opportunity for Ontario young people to make a difference in their lives and in their communities through volunteering. Our ambitious goal this year is to motivate 10,000 young people, ages 14 to 18, to volunteer for three hours during the challenge. This year I am asking members from all political parties to join the challenge by continuing their already considerable volunteerism and volunteering in their communities at some point in the next three weeks, so that they can continue to lead by example when encouraging Ontario's young people to volunteer.

Volunteerism helps to define who we are as a people and brings out the best in all of us, in our communities and in Ontario. It is a way for people to show their values and to reaffirm that as citizens, we all have the potential to build a better Ontario and a better world.

Ontario's volunteers give so much throughout the year. National Volunteer Week is our opportunity to show them how much we appreciate their tireless efforts.



I urge all members to encourage and to celebrate the volunteers in their communities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'd like to echo the comments made by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to recognize National Volunteer Week, April 18 to 24. It is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the work that volunteers do in the province of Ontario. Over five million Ontarians volunteer yearly, contributing over 800 million annual volunteer hours. I might add that our volunteer rate for youth between the ages of 15 and 24 is 63%.

I join with the minister in congratulating the 12 youth who received Ontario's highest honour for young people, the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers, for their national, international and community contributions. In addition, as the minister said, the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards honour thousands of individuals who have contributed many years with a single organization. These local heroes make our communities better. I should also mention the ChangeTheWorld Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge and the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Awards ceremony, which also highlight exceptional Ontarians. All week there are events being held in every corner of our province celebrating volunteers and the good work that they do.

To take up the minister's challenge, I am proud to be participating with the Volunteer Bureau of Leeds and Grenville at this Saturday's mayors' community fundraising walk. The mayors' walk is a perfect kick-off. It offers the opportunity for many organizations to piggy-back their event and say thank you to deserving volunteers. There are over 15,000 active volunteers throughout my local communities, and my Volunteer Bureau of Leeds and Grenville serves 38 communities and 250 active member agencies and affiliates.

I also want to take this opportunity to highlight the private member's bill that my colleague the member for Dufferin—Caledon, Sylvia Jones, tabled yesterday. It's Bill 38, An Act respecting criminal record checks for volunteers. Many volunteer organizations, particularly those dealing with children and individuals with a disability, require their volunteers to submit a criminal record check. In many cases, volunteers have to pay out of their own pocket for that record check or the organization has to fundraise to underwrite the cost of the criminal record check. The goal of her bill is to allow volunteers to pay for this record check once per year, yet other agencies, multiple agencies, could access that at no additional cost. This cost-saving initiative would encourage more volunteers to donate their time to multiple causes and reduce unnecessary duplication of our police services.

Over the years I, like other members of this House, have fond memories of either personally volunteering or meeting other volunteers who have enriched the lives of others, giving their generous time. Ontario's volunteers truly make a difference and I'm proud to have the opportunity to respond to the minister's statement and join in this week's celebration.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I too want to join in celebrating our volunteers, but I would like to tell a parable. It's an ancient one. There's a little village and it's downstream, and every day down the stream come injured, distressed, lonely individuals on rafts and makeshift boats of various sorts. The village becomes a kind of triage unit to patch up these bodies, to look after the distressed, to comfort the lonely. And then a light bulb goes on in one of the villagers' heads, and they say, "What's happening upstream?" They go upstream and they find out that what's happening upstream is neglect and ignorance, and they decide that they need to do something about that, too.

1530

My volunteers—and there are a myriad in my riding: St. Joe's, PARC, CultureLink, Parkdale food bank, our faith communities, West Toronto Support Services, Redwood shelter, Out of the Cold—sent me here with a message. They said they're tired; they're exhausted. They are five million and growing across the province of Ontario. They need help from this government. They need adequate funding. They need adequate housing. The UN charter of rights says housing is a human right. They sent me here from the Out of the Cold program, which, by the way, is just creaking under the weight of the workload for all of those volunteers. I remember when one of the first food banks in Ontario started in a church. They're exhausted.

Churches, synagogues and mosques are running out of volunteers, and so are the social service agencies, victims' services—we're talking about the number of volunteers it takes to just keep their service on the road—because of inadequate funding from this government. Because the funding is not in place to have those trained to do the jobs do the jobs, they're falling to volunteers. So the most vulnerable, the neediest, the most distressed individuals in Ontario are being cared for by incredible volunteers. But they're tired.

They said they are grateful there's a week set aside to honour them. They're grateful for the awards—they are not ungrateful—but they need help. They need more than a medal. They need more than an award. They need more than a week. They actually need adequate funding for our social services. They actually need housing for the homeless. They actually need a reversal of the horrible policy of this government to cut the special diet allowance, which is leading more people to use food banks in my riding than ever before. They need action, and they need action for the most marginalized and the most oppressed, the hungriest and the most homeless in our communities.

They all sent me here with a message. They're all of one mind on this: Please, not another volunteer week, not another medal, until this government has done what governments are supposed to do, and that's look after those who cannot, for various reasons, look after themselves. So until five million volunteers become 10 million volunteers, out of necessity we are asking, we who have long worked in the non-profit community, please help us just a little bit more, sir—Charles Dickens



again. They come hat in hand. They ask for more than just another award.

## PETITIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my riding of Durham, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming;" personal care; chiropractic; "home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and"—last, but certainly not least—"funeral arrangements;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in the" dreaded "health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to Kate, one of the pages here.

### RAIL LINE EXPANSION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it read as follows:

"Whereas Metrolinx is planning to expand diesel rail traffic from 50 trains per day to over 400 trains per day in the Georgetown corridor, which cuts through west-end neighbourhoods; and

"Whereas this expansion will make this the busiest diesel rail corridor in North America; and

"Whereas according to the chief medical officer of the city of Toronto, diesel exhaust poses an especially potent danger to children and the elderly; and

"Whereas diesel trains, including tier 4 locomotives, are extremely harmful to the environment and contribute to climate change, and are also heavy, loud and disruptive to neighbourhoods and local quality of life; and

"Whereas over 350,000 people live within one kilometre of this line, and 30,000 children attend one of more than 250 schools within one kilometre of these tracks;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who demand that our leaders act now to ensure that the

rail expansion in the Georgetown South rail corridor, including the air-rail link, be electrified from the outset, and that there be no further expenditure on tier 4 diesel technology."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sending this petition along to you with page Ara.

### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly. It was collected at Shoppers Drug Mart at the 1000 Islands Mall in Brockville.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1 billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"Reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and week-ends,

"Increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"Increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"Reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I agree with the petition, and I'll give it to page Owen for the table.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly which was collected over in Bruce county around Southampton and Port Elgin.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships ... and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the blended sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;



"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers."

I've signed this, and I will give it to page Mitchell.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas we currently have no psychiatric emergency service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to support the creation of a psychiatric emergency service in emergency at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario."

#### SERVICE CENTRES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 401 service centres at Mallorytown, Ontario, were closed in September 2009 and 250 jobs were lost; and

"Whereas the community has identified the need for a staffed full-service tourist kiosk as part of the redevelopment of the Mallorytown service centres; and

"Whereas the completion date for reconstruction of these centres could be delayed past spring 2011; and

"Whereas the reeve and council of Front of Yonge township have passed a resolution giving the government approval of construction 24 hours a day, seven days a week to expedite the project;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Transportation accelerate reconstructions of the Mallorytown service centres based on the local council's wishes and commit to enhanced tourist service improvements at these sites."

I certainly agree with it, and I'll give it to page Sabina for the table.

1540

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have another petition here, collected from Grey county this time, from people around Owen Sound, Williamsford and Chatsworth. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships ... and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the blended sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers."

I have also signed this and will give it to page Harry.

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly. Actually, I was in North Grenville on the weekend to pick this up at Shoppers Drug Mart in Kemptville. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1 billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"Reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"Increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"Increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"Reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I'll affix my signature to it and pass it on to the page.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I've just found another petition here. It's also to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships ... and lawyer and accountant fees; and



"Whereas the blended sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers."

I've also signed this and will give it to Harry again.

### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me twice today on these issues of petition. The petition subject I have in front of me is "Stop Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles"—a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the growing number of unlawful firearms in motor vehicles is threatening innocent citizens and our police officers;

"Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

"Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and being found in motor vehicles; and

"Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

"We, the undersigned citizens, strongly request and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving unlawful firearms in our communities."

This was sent to me by Mr. Jack Fava, who is the president of a local association of Symington Avenue. I'm giving it to page Khaleel to give to you.

### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition from the good folks at Pharmasave in downtown Brockville. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1 billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty's cuts will:

"Reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"Increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"Increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"Reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

I agree with the petition. I will affix my name to it and I will pass it on to Sabina.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

"Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

"Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

"Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single sales tax; and

"Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

"Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the" harmonized sales tax "and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers."

I'm pleased to sign and to support this petition and to ask page Marie to carry it for me.

### TAXATION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government's plan to harmonize the PST and the GST will result in Ontario taxpayers paying 8% more for a multitude of products and services;

"Whereas the 8% tax increase will increase the cost of services such as housing and real estate services, gasoline, hydro bills, home heating fuel, Internet and cable bills, haircuts, gym memberships, legal services, construction and renovations, car repairs, plumbing and electrical services, landscaping services, leisure activities, hotel rooms, veterinary services for the family pet and even funeral services; and



"Whereas Ontario taxpayers cannot afford this tax grab—particularly in the middle of a recession;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to abandon the sales tax increase announced in the 2009 budget."

As I am in agreement, I've signed my name.

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas we never want to see another tragedy like Walkerton ever again. The health and safety of Ontarians can never come second to profit and greed. Clean, safe drinking water is a right all Ontarians should be able to enjoy.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;

"To continue to monitor and test our water systems;

"To continue to strengthen Ontario's trust in the safety of our drinking water;

"To continue to invest in new systems and personnel to monitor and test our water;

"To never forget the mistakes of the past and always hold our water supply to the highest standard; and

"To continue to invest in the health and safety of Ontarians through our water supply."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Max.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. John Milloy:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 16, An Act to implement 2010 Budget measures and to enact or amend various Acts, when the bill is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That, except in the case of a recorded division arising from morning orders of the day pursuant to standing order 9(c), no deferral of the second reading vote shall be permitted; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, April 29, 2010, during its regular meeting times for the purpose of public hearings on the bill and during its regular meeting times on Thursday, May 6, 2010, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

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That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 noon on Tuesday, May 4, 2010. At 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 6, 2010, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, May 10, 2010. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That when the order for third reading of the bill is called, 60 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Milloy has moved government notice of motion number 4. Further debate?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Very briefly, despite the length of the motion that came forward, basically the motion calls upon the House to move ahead with the budget bill, a very, very important bill. I don't think that anyone here would question the reason for some speed in terms of moving ahead with this bill. We are at a crossroads in our province. We are emerging from a very serious recession which has racked the globe, really, and we're also in a transition as an economy as we move forward with new areas of innovation and embrace new economies.

The budget that came forward built upon the speech from the throne. It embraced an approach to governing here in Ontario, an agenda for the future: the Open Ontario agenda. Some may want to run away from these global challenges, but our government wants to embrace them, and sees them as opportunities that we can build upon in the economy here in Ontario. We can move forward with the types of measures that are going to help us through this transformation and will help us achieve the prosperity that Ontarians need moving forward.



So by bringing forward this motion, we are asking the Legislature to deal forthwith with the budget bill, which will enact so much of our Open Ontario plan and allow Ontario to, as I always put it, not only weather the current economic storm but emerge from it stronger than ever and in a position to embrace the opportunities that exist throughout the world—part of our Open Ontario agenda. As I said, this is a very long motion, but in essence, in those few, brief words, I've described what its intention is.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I must say, first off, that the logic of what I just heard escapes me. We're talking about a bill here—the budget bill with, I think, 31 schedules—that deals with matters of incredible import.

This takes me back to my days as a talk radio host. This is a number of years ago now, but I had a particular caller who would call me repeatedly when we had repetitious subject matter, which there always is in talk radio, and he'd start the debate by saying, "Here we go again." I remember George very well, so I'll quote George today: Here we go again.

Somebody asked me recently what it was like to work in the Parliament of Ontario, the assembly here. I said, "You know, it's a bit of a subversion of the British parliamentary system, in the sense that you elect a party every four years to govern Ontario, but it's an awful lot different from what I think was intended when the British parliamentary system was invented. At that time, the government of the day introduced legislation—that's not unlike what we have now—and it was for the opposition to critique that legislation, and ultimately for changes to be made for the common good.

These days, what we do is, we elect a dictator every four years, and that dictator gets to put through what he wants. This time allocation type of motion is precisely the embodiment of what we're talking about. Okay?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** You can hoot and holler on the other side all you want, but the fact of the matter is, you're doing what you want to do.

This is a time allocation motion that says, in effect, that a bill with 31 schedules, that deals with the finances of the province of Ontario to the tune of \$100-billion-plus and spends \$20 billion more than you're taking in, can be dispensed with, as myself and my colleagues take our last crack at you for 40 minutes in total, you allow the third party to do the same, and then you get to talk a little bit, if you want to, on the government side, and it's all over.

This thing goes to committee for what? One day. In that one day of hearings, followed by one day of clause-by-clause review, what you talk about is the composition, structure and administration of funds by local health integration networks. You talk about the introduction of a harmonized sales tax and how it will affect citizens in the province of Ontario. You talk about what you're doing by downloading health costs through pharmacists to

people who will no longer get the service quality they want in the pharmacy community. That's what you are doing, and the time allocation motion forces that through.

I think to myself: Do you ever wonder, if you weren't a member here, what you'd think about debate and how it works? Debate in this place is dictated by bills. You're the government, on the other side. Your job is to defend the bills you present, and our job on this side is to oppose the bills you present. We don't always do that, because occasionally there's something that we want to agree with. But the give and take that's supposed to be there, which I alluded to in talking about the British parliamentary system, just isn't there. It's that give and take that would result in better circumstances for the province of Ontario. It's the reason why, I dare say, every single person watching this today knows that they voted, if they voted, for each and every one of us, regardless of party, to come here and do just that. I fear that with these kinds of motions, we don't get a chance to do that job.

When bills are debated, members talk about what's in the bill. You can say, on the face of it, "Well, that sounds pretty logical. Let's talk about what's in the bill." I say, let's talk about what's not, because oftentimes the problem with bills is not what they say; it's what they miss. Since there's basically, in the budget bill, nothing much new under the sun, members are left with only one option, and that's for us to talk about what's not in the bill—and that is business as usual in the province of Ontario under the Dalton McGuinty government. Dalton McGuinty had a great opportunity here, in a time that we keep being reminded is indeed a time post-recession, the largest recession that we've seen in many years—he had an opportunity to demonstrate bold leadership that Ontario urgently needs, and he failed to deliver. Basically, it's because he never wants to believe, much less accept, how things are.

It brings me back to June 2008. Members will recall that the recessionary period began in the fall, roughly October 2008. So we're dealing with three or four months in advance—12 weeks, if I can quantify it. There I am sitting in a CBC studio with a member of the NDP, if I recall correctly, the member from Timmins, and with the member from Vaughan, a former finance minister of this province. It was an interview being conducted on radio on the French CBC. The host, Benoit Cantin, asked about how we felt as the session came to an end in June 2008 on behalf of our individual parties, and I used the term, in French, "déclin profond," a steep decline. I was mentioning that in connection with the economy, and the first retort that came out of the mouth of the member from Vaughan was, "This is not a steep decline. This is a marginal decline. It will smooth out."

It was around the time that the Premier of the province was using phraseology like, "This too shall pass." It was at the end of a session in which any time our party or the third party asked a question that pertained to the economy of the province, we got back a recitation of how bad we were because we left a supposed \$5.5-billion deficit in place. Then we got a recitation of the government's



five-point plan to resolve everything. That's what we got. Twelve weeks later, we were in, if I may say it again, a déclin profond, a profound decline in the economy, which of course the McGuinty government takes absolutely no credit for doing anything but turning around.

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Let me tell you, if you take a look at what we see today, "turnaround" is the last word that I would apply to the province of Ontario as it sits today. As it sits today, we're in a jobless recovery. We don't see any real motion in the unemployment rate. And what we've got to face, and what our children and our grandchildren have to face, is a very significant debt, the most significant debt in the history of the province, not payable by this generation and certainly going forward.

We've got a problem, and that bold leadership that one would have expected wasn't there. Ontario needed a budget that demonstrated a real plan so we could once again become the best place in the world to invest, not a have-not province; where you could start a business, where you could expect to create jobs, to thrive and do more than survive.

What we heard was a phrase, and that phrase was "Open Ontario." What exactly were we before the government brought a phrase forward like "Open Ontario"? Were we closed? I would suggest that this government has done everything that it possibly could to close Ontario, and it throws a catchphrase at us like "Ontario is open for business." Ontario is not open for business.

A scant few weeks ago in this Legislature, I put forward a series of questions about venture capital, venture capital which has fallen off a cliff. Back in 2003, we were getting billions of dollars of venture capital investment in this province. Now it's down to a couple of tens of millions, around \$30 million. In the period of time of that recession, we watched a decline in 2009 of approximately 50% of venture capital investment in the province of Ontario. You could say, "Well, that was the recession at play." Sure, it was the recession at play. Then why, in the same period of time, did Quebec, next door to us, see an increase, marginal though it may have been, of 6%? The reason was that Quebec was open for business and we were closed. We eliminated tax credits on venture capital, we put ourselves in the back seat, and that's where we still are. That's the kind of thing that we could be addressing in terms of creating a truly open Ontario.

In a world where other jurisdictions are introducing bold new ideas to recover from this recession, to create jobs, we instead saw a tired, out-of-gas government continue with the same high taxes, the same reckless spending that failed to prevent or prepare us for the hard times.

Need I remind members, and need I remind viewers out there watching the Ontario legislative channel, that before we ever got to a recession in the fall of 2008, that government, on its watch, had seen a decline in good, well-paying manufacturing jobs in excess of 200,000? That had nothing to do with the recession, and none of them have returned to the province of Ontario. Try to tell

one of those unemployed people that Ontario is open for business.

Today, Ontario has fallen so far that our standard of living is below the troubled state of Michigan, and our jobless rate is not only higher than the Canadian average; it is also higher than the imploding economy of Greece. Think about that.

I don't know how many of you watch television; I don't watch too much of it myself. The other day, there was a Dateline program on NBC that looked at Detroit, and it shocked me. I knew that Detroit was in decline, but that was a city—which 20 years ago was at the heart of the auto industry in the United States—in a state that's not unlike the province of Ontario. It's our next-door neighbour. They had 2.5 million people living in metropolitan Detroit, and it's now under one million. You can buy a home in Detroit for \$1,500—I said \$1,500. There are 800 vegetable gardens, farms, growing in the central urban core of the city of Detroit. Why? Because people have to eat and there are no more food stores. You can walk into those things and pick tomatoes at will. Are we heading for that? I suggest to you that given the economy of the state of Michigan, given what it has been through, and given the fact that it hasn't been addressed in a mixed way, the way Canadians deal with their problems, it's fallen that far, and it's fallen that far that fast.

Given the fact that we have that kind of an economy, don't dismiss the possibility that we may face something similar, as you continue to debate in a time allocation motion, lasting 40 minutes per party, the fact that you're going to pass a budget of the levels that we've been talking about.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure to get up, and it's always fun to follow my friend from Thornhill. He has one of those sonorous voices. He comes from a broadcasting career, and it shows. We may not agree on much in the final analysis, but we certainly agree on this.

First of all, this motion is a motion of closure; that is, a motion to shut down debate, not to open it up. I find it quite ironic that the McGuinty Liberals brought in a closure motion. Were they not the party in opposition that was always screaming about closure motions under the Mike Harris government? Well, they've out-Harris'd Harris by doing it frequently themselves—and particularly a budget bill, presumably one of the most important pieces of legislation.

It's also ironic because, speaking of the McGuinty Liberals in opposition, I remember the screaming and the yelling when Bob Rae—albeit now, of course, a Liberal; then arguably a Liberal as well—Premier of Ontario, hit, supposedly, the debt wall at \$10 billion. Well, this budget positions us at more than twice that in terms of a deficit. Yet where is the hue and cry about the debt wall? I remember sad stories appearing in the press about an elephant that ran out of food at a zoo because of the worldwide recession and how it might have to be put down. Every day there was a knocking upon that govern-



ment because of the incredible debt. Yet here, when it's more than twice as much, "Ah, no big deal. It's only \$21 billion."

In a sense, what this budget does, by doing very little or almost nothing, is it puts us in a position of losing even more: possibly losing everything.

I want to talk about my areas of portfolio interest and really focus on those, because I know a little later this afternoon I'm going to be followed by the member from Beaches-East York, who will be talking about his areas of expertise and his portfolios.

First and foremost, let's talk about small business. This is not a government that is on the side of small business. Evidence A: They don't even have a portfolio for small business anymore. In the last cabinet shuffle, small business was shuffled right off of the cabinet table onto the floor and presumably swept out of the room, because nobody is responsible over there for small business. So in our shadow cabinet over here in the New Democratic Party, I don't have anyone to shadow. Surprise, surprise. Why should we be surprised?

I hosted TABIA, the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas—and a shout-out to them, by the way. They just celebrated their 40th anniversary on Saturday night. It was a pleasure to attend that celebration. It started in my own riding: Bloor West BIA was the very first BIA in the world—and they are also 40 years old, so we celebrated that. TABIA came here representing almost 30,000 businesses in the greater Toronto area. They came here to protest the HST. They had a conference. Eighty per cent of their members, small business personified, are against the HST, and we'll talk about why in a minute. Suffice to say, they came here hoping to get an audience with the government and received no audience. Almost 30,000 small businesses and their representatives come to Queen's Park, and nobody wants to meet with them? Nobody gives them the time of day? I receive this kind of outlook, of course, on the behalf of the McGuinty Liberals over and over again. I've seen it ever since I was elected.

1610

I remember the issue of Karl's butcher shop that went out of business after 40 years. Why? Because of onerous, onerous laws and regulations applied to small butcher shops. When we look at the problem areas, it wasn't small butcher shops. That's not where listeriosis came from. It was the big butcher shops. It was Maple Leaf Foods.

Now we're seeing the same pattern repeat itself with pharmacies. Methinks Shoppers does protest a little bit too much on this one. Shoppers is going to be fine. Shoppers is going to withstand whatever this government throws at it. Who's not going to withstand whatever this government throws at it? The small pharmacies, the ma-and-pa pharmacies, the rural pharmacies, the northern pharmacies and the pharmacies right in the heart of downtown Toronto that have to compete with Shoppers: Those are the ones that are going to close. We're receiving hundreds of petitions from them because they're

going to be wiped out by this government. Again, we see the slant: big business, yes; small business, absolutely no interest.

Yet when we look at the supposed job creation strategy of this government—they say they have one; it's hard to find anywhere—surely that should include small business. After all, small business accounts for 90% of the jobs in this province. If the government policy is to go around wiping out willy-nilly small business, butcher shops one week, pharmacies the next, where are those jobs going to be created? It's a question.

No, this government's strategy for job creation is very, very clear, and it doesn't work. We know it doesn't work because it's been tried for 20 years in jurisdictions around the world, and it's never worked. That is, you throw money at large corporations and you hope it trickles down into jobs. You throw it, quite frankly, without any guarantees of job creation. You throw it without any guarantees they'll even stay in the province. You throw it without much analysis.

You call it a tax reduction when, in fact, the tax reduction only goes to the most profitable of the large corporations because you have to make profits before you pay taxes. It only goes to profit. It doesn't help the manufacturers. It doesn't help the corporations that are barely hanging on, many of them Ontario-based. It doesn't help them. We saw the case just earlier of the brewery in Hamilton—doesn't help them—hanging on. Not so much anymore; they're going to close up. It doesn't help them. It helps banks; it doesn't help them. Very much, that's the slant, and small business knows it. They see it. They know that McGuinty Liberals are no friend of theirs. It's sad. It really is sad.

Here's a government that's on the side of Bay Street. This government is not on the side of Main Street. Here's a government on the side of the mall, not Main Street. It's the mall or Bay Street, not Main Street. That's the McGuinty Liberals, and Main Street knows it. As they shutter up their pharmacies and their butcher shops or whatever the next target is of the McGuinty Liberals, they'll know it even more—small business.

Housing is in my portfolio as well. Yesterday we had the Housing Network of Ontario here, an umbrella group of many tenants' groups and housing activist groups across Ontario. Here are some chilling statistics. One in five tenant households in Ontario spends over 50% of their income on rent. Over 260,000 households—not individuals, households—are forced to choose between paying the rent and buying food or other necessities. One in six children is living in poverty in this province, and a large reason for that poverty is the high price of housing. Yet this government continues on; housing is not mentioned in the budget, as if that's not a reality, as if we don't live, to coin the name of an organization, in a disaster area where housing is concerned.

I brought forward a motion that was supported by housing activists, a very simple motion, really. It was a motion that just said we should uphold the UN Charter of Rights, and that calls for housing as a human right. This



government would never sign on to something like that. Why? Because it might put the onus on them to actually provide housing.

Housing is one of those fascinating areas, because when you look at how to create wealth, do you buy the trickle-down theory, give it to the biggest, most profitable corporations, hope it trickles down, somewhere down here to the poorest in the province? Or do you invest in infrastructure and housing? Do you invest at the base, as it were, to uplift the people who are marginalized so that they can become consumers, so that they can become contributing members of the economy? Obviously, my bias is towards the latter, and I'll tell you that it makes economic sense and that, in fact, it does work.

Even if you look at the Celtic tiger, much as they've had some problems, one of first things they did in Ireland was invest in housing. They invested in housing. How does that work? I know when John Gerretsen was the housing minister we had a very interesting little discussion in estimates committee one year in which I brought forward a couple of studies: one from New York, one from Vancouver. Both of those studies showed it costs between \$45,000 and \$55,000 a year to keep someone homeless. And people say, "Why?" Well, you've got shelter costs; you've got health care costs; you've got criminal costs, legal costs—all of those costs are involved in keeping somebody homeless.

This is a false economy. To invest in housing is to save money. To invest in housing is to invest in the future economic prosperity of the person who is housed. It's been shown over and over again in jurisdictions around the world. It's actually cheaper to build a housing unit than it is to keep someone homeless, yet this government seems to think, "Well, a penny spent today is possibly a pound saved tomorrow." It doesn't work that way with human beings in a human-centred economy and society.

Compare that, for example, just one jurisdiction—but there are many I could compare it with; New York is one that jumps to mind where that study was used to then build housing units. But Sweden, a community of nine million—we have 13 million some-odd in Ontario—built 100,000 new units of housing per year for 10 years. We can barely get it together to live up to the McGuinty promise of six years ago of 20,000. We don't have anywhere near that, of truly affordable housing, six years later with 13 million. Sweden did 100,000 every single year. They did it at a time of economic challenge. They saw it as an investment because it put people to work building; it invested in bricks and mortar and infrastructure development; it got the trades going, and at the end of the day, it was cheaper than keeping people homeless. It worked. It simply worked.

Sweden is a vibrant, capitalistic economy. It has Sony Ericsson; it has H&M; it has Volvo; it has Ikea. We all know Swedish companies; they trade around the world—nine million, and again, an interesting look at how you invest in manufacturing and how you get your companies up and running. Interestingly, I didn't mention that they

invested in Korean companies or American companies. This government likes to invest in companies that will take the profits from here to there. Uh-uh. European jurisdictions, for the most part—Sweden in particular, since I'm using that example—invest in homegrown industry, start when they're medium-sized or small, and help them grow to be large. That's how smart government does it. They don't give money away without any guarantees. They invest in research and design here, so that those companies prosper here and those companies hire people here. That's the point.

So again, to get back to housing, because I veered a little there, one of the bills that I brought in last year regarding housing that has had the support of just about every municipality that has had a chance to look at it and talk about it at their city councils is inclusionary zoning. Inclusionary zoning doesn't cost a tax dime. Inclusionary zoning, which is huge throughout jurisdictions in the United States, used in Vancouver, used throughout Europe, used in London, England—London, England, has used it extremely successfully, among others. My bill, by the way, a very small-c conservative bill, didn't ask a lot of this government; it just asked of this government to move aside so that municipalities, if they so chose, could bring in inclusionary zoning bylaws and laws. That's all it did. It got the Ontario Municipal Board out of the way so that municipalities could actually move ahead on that file.

#### 1620

Many municipalities, whether they thought they wanted to move ahead or not, really welcomed the move—the inclusionary zoning bill. That's why I'm going to bring it back: because they want me to. People from Mississauga to Toronto to North Bay all see that as a step forward, a step towards progress on the housing file, which is pretty moribund. They say that this is a way forward in a recession. No tax dollars are needed here; just the negotiating skills of councilpersons and cities with the developing community. Quite frankly, even for the developing community it's not a bad deal if the market is poor. If it's a hot market, of course, it's a little bit more of a negotiation. If it's a poor market, what it does is take those empty units, those unsellables, and actually put them into use as housing. The developer gets some money back; the community gets housing; everybody wins. It's a win-win bill, which is why Americans love it. It's throughout the United States now, in many jurisdictions.

I expected to see that in the budget. I expected to see it in the budget—with the word "housing," which I didn't see in the budget either—because it doesn't cost anything. By our calculations, it could provide tens of thousands of new units over time without costing anything. Inclusionary zoning, for those watching at home who don't know what I'm talking about, is simply the requirement that when you develop—and most people have a minimum number of units—say, over 50 units, you have to set aside, say, 10% of those units for rent-to-own or some sort of affordable housing. Usually it's rent-



to-own because that's what people want. That's what people want in my community. Tenants would like to one day own their own homes, but they can't scrape together the down payment in a hot market. They can't get the first payment out the door to get that home that they need, deserve and could use. This way, they can pay rent to own it eventually.

Again, it's a no-brainer, one would think, because it doesn't require anything of this government except to get out of the way of municipalities who might want to introduce legislation. That's it. There's nothing prescriptive about it. Even that isn't in the budget bill where housing is concerned. That's sad, because we will continue to spend more and more money keeping people homeless. We will continue to spend \$45,000 to \$55,000 a year to keep someone sleeping on a grate on University Avenue, which is pure and utter insanity, and most other jurisdictions of the world see it as such.

Employment standards: I only have a couple of minutes left because I want to leave some time for my colleague, but suffice to say that maternity leave—there are many no-brainer moves this government could make. One of them is, right now if you get pregnant on the job—people don't know this until it happens to them, unfortunately—you could actually be fired and not rehired. That falls, really, under employment standards and my women's critic portfolios. This is unconscionable, and it's happening across Ontario. When times are tough, employment standards are the first things to be weakened and to be lost. That's one of them. That's a very simple loophole that this government could close to protect women, women at their most vulnerable, to protect their jobs. They're not willing to do that. We brought in women who were expecting to talk about that loophole, to no response and to no reaction in the budget. In fact, women and women's issues, period, aren't really mentioned in the budget, despite the fact that women still make 71 cents on the dollar for every dollar a man makes—again, absences that fall under my jurisdiction.

Just to wrap up in the minute left, we're talking about a closure motion, just to get back to the basics here. We're talking about a shutting down of the debate about the most important piece of legislation that will probably pass this House in the last dying days of the Dalton McGuinty empire. Here's our chance, backbenchers in the Liberal Party. Here's our chance, because I've seen some shifting and moving over there. I've seen some concern, starting with the HST perhaps, moving throughout—electric trains: I've heard a petition. I ask of you that you don't vote in lockstep, that you question your own government.

When I was in England just recently, I watched Labour backbench MPs, who are frightened for their seats, no doubt, not send lob questions at the cabinet. They actually asked real questions of their cabinet—pointed, barbed questions—because they knew that's what their ridings and constituencies wanted. I ask the same of the members across the way. I ask the same of them: that they take on the corner office, just now and

then, just once or twice, on behalf of their constituents. You know what they're saying. You hear them just as well as we do on this side of the House.

So I ask: Listen. Don't shut down debate. It's always a bad move. It's really a tyrannical move, let's face it. Open up the debate. Let's have more deputations on this important bill from all those stakeholder groups that haven't been heard and don't feel that they've been heard yet. Let's remember that there's such a thing as small business, even if we don't have a portfolio representing it in the cabinet anymore. Let's please remember housing and finally, after three years of waiting, bring in a report and let the report do what the report needs to do, which is house people. Finally, let's look at the issues that affect half of the population under employment standards and let's start to make our workplaces places where, again, fairness is the order of the day.

All of this and much, much more could be said. Unfortunately, I'm running out of time. But again, I would just ask that the members opposite finally, in the final analysis, truly look out for the needs of their constituents. Listen. Bring those voices here. Bring those voices here even if they happen to contradict the voices emanating from the corner office. Bring those voices here. Listen to those voices. React, because that's, finally, what you're elected to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I appreciate the opportunity this afternoon to join the discussion with respect to the time allocation motion on Bill 16, the 2010 budget measures act. I listened with interest to the member from Thornhill and the member from Parkdale–High Park, and I am really surprised at some of the comments that I am hearing.

First of all, before I make some of the comments around the budget and tell you why I'm supporting the budget, why I think it's good for northern Ontario, good for my community and good for the province of Ontario, I just want to respond to a couple of the comments that were made. There were some comments made around the former finance minister being interviewed with respect to denying that we were heading into a recession in 2008. I think the former finance minister has done an incredible job for this province. Certainly, Minister Duncan has done a great job listening to the northern caucus around the needs for northern Ontario and listening to the people of Ontario through all of the pre-budget consultations that took place and helped to make up the budget that we are voting on in the coming week or so.

But the member probably should have been interviewing Stephen Harper or Jim Flaherty. Comments, at the time when we were heading into the recession, around, "You know, there are some good stock buys," and denying that there was a recession even taking place, I think are probably more telling about a government and a party that was out of touch with the people in this country and this province.

In the last budget, in reflection of those challenges that we were facing as a province, we made huge investments



in stimulus funding; huge investments, certainly, in my community. There is a litany of projects that are now moving forward, and I would bet that in ridings all across Ontario, represented by the members here in this House, there are some great projects that were part of the stimulus allocation that members in this House voted against. They're proceeding, and yet the members continue to call for more money for those projects—and probably showed up for the ribbon-cuttings, the ground-breakings and all of those other things as though they were delivering on those things, but they voted against them.

Today, we have an opportunity to continue to move forward with another budget that builds on the previous budget, where a lot of that stimulus funding found its way to communities all across Ontario.

I know that in northern Ontario we have had a challenging time with the economy, like many other parts of Ontario. In this budget, there is a northern industrial electricity rate program that's worth about \$150 million annually for large industrial users. It has the potential to reduce energy prices by a further 25%. This builds on the northern pulp and paper transition program that helped to see dollars return to forestry sector companies to help them with their energy costs. So this is another step in reducing energy costs for large industrial users in northern Ontario.

1630

I want to speak to another important program, which is a northern Ontario energy credit, both for individuals and for families. Single individuals would receive up to \$130 and families up to \$200.

I want to call on the northern members in the NDP caucus to support this budget and these programs. These are initiatives that they have been calling for and complaining about, yet they are still not prepared to do the right thing and support this particular budget.

There are a couple of other really important initiatives. The northern Ontario heritage fund program: When we began this term of government, the funds sat at \$60 million. It's a strategic program to help create jobs and spur economic development in northern Ontario. We committed in 2007 that this fund would be increased to \$100 million over four years of this mandate, and we are doing that in this budget. There's a further \$10 million injection, bringing that fund to \$90 million. So again, I want to encourage my colleagues in northern Ontario who are in the NDP caucus to vote in favour of this, because it's really important.

The other thing I want to point out that is contained in the budget for northeastern Ontario is \$15 million for an investment in short-line rail from Sault Ste. Marie, my riding, to the community of Sudbury. It is a 288-kilometre stretch of rail that will be upgraded. We've stepped up to the plate and we are waiting for the confirmation that the federal government will do the same. Minister Baird has indicated that they will, which is good news. I know that the Huron Central short-line company is waiting for that official confirmation, and we expect that to be forthcoming.

In 2003-04, the northern Ontario highway budget allocation was about \$248 million. Today, it stands at approximately \$650 million. It is proof that our government is working for northerners, listening to northern families, and working to improve the vital infrastructure that helps to keep northern Ontario vibrant.

We know that there are a number of other important investments: \$1.2 billion in infrastructure that will be spent in northern Ontario; \$45 million over the next three years to assist aboriginals by giving them the skills and training that they need to be more active participants in the northern Ontario economy. They've done a fantastic job with the De Beers project and the funding that we have helped to provide through MTCU in developing that site. I had the opportunity to go to the De Beers diamond mine site off the coast of James Bay and listen, firsthand, to stories of many of the individuals who are receiving some of that training. We're very, very excited about that project.

We know that there's another great project that is about to get under way in the area of northwestern Ontario referred to as the Ring of Fire, which has a massive chromite deposit. We know that the aboriginals and the First Nations people in northwestern Ontario see this as very exciting news and an opportunity to further participate in the economy and in improving their quality of life with some great opportunities there.

So with respect to northern Ontario, I'm very excited about the initiatives that are contained in this budget, and I want to encourage all members to support the budget.

Just on a couple of other aspects of the budget that I think are really important that we should not overlook: I think health care and education are a couple of really key areas, for obvious reasons.

Since we came into government in 2003, we have increased funding for health care by 57%. It's a remarkable amount of resources going into our health care system. We've got 10,000 more nurses working and almost 3,000 more doctors working. We're building 17 more hospitals. In my community, our hospital is set to open next March. It's a \$400-million project. It's great news for our community. It's something that neither government in the past moved forward. Our government certainly was willing to do that, and we are very appreciative in our community to see these projects come to life.

With respect to the education sector in the budget, we've also added another \$310 million to further create 20,000 spaces. Since 2003, we've already created 120,000 new spaces in our post-secondary education sector, which is great news for people across Ontario. I know that in the K-to-12 area, we've got four school projects going on, a \$47-million new high school that is under construction. We haven't built a new high school in Sault Ste. Marie in over 40 years. No other party was willing to make the investments in the renewal of the infrastructure for our young people. We're doing that today. It's so important.

I was at a groundbreaking for an elementary school last week, a \$15.5-million school for the Algoma District



School Board. I know my colleague the MPP from Algoma-Manitoulin, who also represents the geographic area that that school board serves, is certainly very proud of these investments that we are making that will serve the entire Sault and Algoma region.

There are a couple more projects that are going ahead, both in the francophone board in our community as well as in the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board. They will be building a new elementary school expansion, if you will; it will start next spring.

There's really exciting news. I know the per-pupil funding has gone up by over 50% since we've come to government, and I know that in our community alone, or in the Sault and Algoma district, with both major boards combined, that has meant about 85 teaching positions have been retained that have helped to reduce the class sizes, helped to drive the test scores up and reduce the dropout rates. It's really great news, and those are the results of changes to the funding formula since 2003.

I know there are other colleagues who want to comment on the time allocation budget motion because it's so important that we comment on this and reference the importance of this budget, certainly to our community and to our ridings and to the people of Ontario.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** I hear comments across the way. I'm surprised they don't want to support the budget. There are obvious investments that we need to make, and they would have us take another course.

I remember the days when we closed hospital beds and we cut funding for education and we ignored northern Ontario as a region. No one in our community wants to go back there.

I will just encourage members to support the budget. I think it's a great budget, certainly a great budget for my community. I'll leave it at that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I don't really know where to begin, honestly, on Bill 16.

First of all, this is time allocation. This really is the guillotine motion of all guillotine motions. In fact, here's the issue: They are trying to silence us in our role as opposition for the people of Ontario. We are the remaining voice for the people of Ontario. They're not listening anymore. They've lost control.

The real issue here is about jobs and the economy. There's not one mention of that in here. It's all about spending. Of course, I think I have to put much of this in context. I can look, first of all, at my own riding of Durham, and I know the outstanding issues. Jobs is number one, health care would be number two, completion of projects—the 407, the completion of the GO east expansion study, the new-build nuclear.

Just today, what is the proof of this government's lack of a plan? Today, they cut—I don't have the exact number—a number of full-time positions at the Durham Children's Aid Society. I was called by the media. These are vulnerable children and families. That's the delivery

of this government's budget measures, and they're proud of it.

I want to put it in context by saying, what do the third party commentaries say about this? I just arbitrarily picked a few clippings. These are right from our mainstream media each day. I'm just going to, in no particular sequence here—this is the first one. It says, "Bankrupt of Fresh Ideas," and this is from the Toronto Sun. It outlines a number of—

*Laughter.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** See, they're laughing. The indifference here—they think that they're somehow entitled. They don't care about the people of Ontario. This is the sad dilemma.

I'm going to continue, and these aren't all from the Toronto Sun; I won't attribute, necessarily, to where they come from—this is the Toronto Star, and it says, "No Big Cuts ... Despite Deficit."

They go on to say, quite honestly, "If the review concludes that change in Ontario's assets is in the public interest, your government will use the proceeds to better support Ontarians' highest priorities...."

1640

What would those be? Well, I know they're going to start, or sort of start, hiring more consultants. They're spending \$1 million a day on consultants. Keep in mind—and they're laying off at children's aid, persons who are providers for our children.

Another article here says, "Canada's Greece? Ontario Better Get Its Act Together." This is from the Globe and Mail, and it refers to Ontario as being the Greece of the European common market. But here's what's more important, and I think the member from Peterborough, Mr. Leal, should listen: Bank governor David Dodge suggests that it "is a significant 'structural' deficit that will persist and grow even when the economy fully rebounds."

Mr. Dodge, the former governor of the Bank of Canada, "told a business audience in Toronto last week that Ontario's spending is outpacing revenue growth so quickly that the result will be a structural deficit equivalent to 3.5% of the province's economic output by 2020, even in good economic times. By comparison, Greece's structural deficit currently stands at about 5.8%."

It goes on to say that really the whole story is not being told here. They're citing positions that are completely unrealistic. They're citing a million jobs here and a million jobs there—the green bill, 16,000 jobs. There are no substantive plans for any recovery in this province dealing with the private sector or the business sector except the HST.

In the HST, which is the combined tax, there's an exemption for any business with, I think, \$10 million of gross income. They don't get any of the benefit until about 2018. The small business sector is getting a reduction of 1%. That's what they're getting, 1%, and they're calling this a victory.

I'll tell you the real numbers. I read a group article here that's not necessarily—this is the Toronto Region Labour Market Monitor. I'm not making this up. Pay



attention. Listen to your constituents. Here's what's being said. This is the Toronto labour market report dated February 10—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Madam Speaker, they're barracking over there. Bill, you should be on this side anyway.

Here's the other part: "From February 2009 to February 2010, the labour force in the economic region of Toronto increased by 42,700 due to growth in the working-age population" coming to the market. There are 42,700 people in the Toronto market who were ready and looking for work.

Here are the actual results: "The employment rate in the region fell to 61.3%, 1.1 percentage points lower than the same month last year. Unemployment increased by 29,500, leading to a rise in the unemployment rate from 8.1%" to almost 9%. Now, a couple of months later, it's at 10%.

So what they're missing here is that the jobs that create the wealth and the revenue for the province are going in the opposite direction to the plan. This is a jobless recovery. We all want Ontario to recover, but to look at how this is actually working—respectfully, everyone can't work for the government. Those are important jobs; I understand that. But what about the forestry industry? What about the pulp and paper industry? What about the mining industry? What about the auto industry?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Steel.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** What about the steel industry? Look at Sudbury. The city of Sudbury is paralyzed.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** It's a strike.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Mr. Brown mentions the strike, and the strike is based on what? The Vale Inco strike is based on a \$4.3-billion deficit in the pension fund, and your government has no plan to deal with it. In fact, you're dealing with another mining issue where they're going to do all the processing outside of Ontario. It's called the Ring of Fire.

I am so surprised and disappointed that people haven't found out that Premier McGuinty has no plan. If there's a problem, he writes a cheque and solves the problem for today, but he has no long-term plan—none, none at all.

Where does he go to look for energy? He goes to Samsung. What about our universities? The University of Toronto, the University of Waterloo, the University of Western Ontario, Queen's University, top academic institutions—ignored. Go to Samsung, go to Singapore; anywhere but Ontario. I think they've lost their focus. Singapore throws a few bucks at them to buy in and tie up most of the grid, unfortunately. This is just the proof. To the people of Ontario: The members on this side are trying to be your voice. That's the labour situation in Toronto, and it's worse in other parts of Ontario. In fact, there's a whole section in the budget trying to help out northern Ontario with lower electricity rates. I would say that Samsung in Korea is one example, but it's not the only example. Where are they going next week? They're going to Israel in May to try and export jobs over there, too.

Where are the jobs and innovation? Where's the innovation strategy? There isn't one.

I'm going to go on. Here's another article. I said that I'd try to bring third party commentary to this thing. This article here is entitled, "It's Dalton in Wonderland":

"To listen to Monday's throne speech, you'd think everything was ticking along nicely in this province."

Then she talked, in the details of the article, about rural health. Well, don't get me started, but anyway—I have started myself, I guess.

Here's the next article. It says here, "Taking aim at health costs." Well, we're dealing tomorrow with an opposition day motion on the pharmacy debate, the issue of pharmacies. It is a tragedy in disguise, and even the members themselves don't understand the issue. Finally, they're reading the notes that Premier McGuinty and Premier Matthews, Deb Matthews—well, the next Premier, probably.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, George Smitherman isn't here any more, so she'd be the next logical one. She's quite bright, but she's got it wrong on this one.

The point is this: On the pharmacy issue as part of health care, we know it's the soft piece of health care, growing at 15% a year in expenditures. The next piece is being talked about now under CIHI, the Canadian Institute for Health Information, which has stated in a report floated out there how overpaid our doctors are.

At the same time, Linda Haslam-Stroud of the Ontario Nurses' Association—I have an article from her, if you'd like, I'll just cite it here. It says, "Ontario Nurses' Association ... President Linda Haslam-Stroud ... says that today's provincial budget means more service and nursing cuts for patients in this province."

There it is. It's not from our leader, Tim Hudak; our deputy leader, Christine Elliott, who's our critic; or Elizabeth Witmer, for that matter, who has a long history and a lot of knowledge. Taking aim at health costs—we're going to see that it's not just going to be the pharmacists.

On the pharmacists piece, I'm going to try to help out the members on the government side. There are four constituents in the pharmacy debate.

One is Big Pharma. These are the drugs that are the predecessors, the patent-protected drugs. It's called Big Pharma, and 70% of all drugs sold in Ontario are Big Pharma.

The smallest part is the generic. That's when it drops out of Big Pharma into the generic, which are the imitation drugs. Those generic companies provided to the pharmacists incentives called promotional allowances to encourage people to use the generic, which is more affordable. That allowed pharmacists to work to make sure that there was no conflict of prescribed medications for their patients. They were available seven days a week, 24 hours a day, in many cases at nights when hospitals and doctors' offices were closed.

So there's Big Pharma, there's the generic, and then there's the pharmacist, the person face to face with the



customer, the person who actually knows the difference between the generic drug and the patent drug. I have a case where it's clear that some of the generic drugs are being dropped and the patent drug is going to replace it at double the cost.

I would say that long-term care is another part where there's not sufficient funding in an aging population. There's no plan there at all—none. You're actually trying to license the retirement homes.

The final thing I should say—I'm sort of being cut off here—is that when there's a lack of a plan, it starts to worry us. So Bill 16—it's being time-allocated. The time allocation is primarily to force this into committee to move a couple of amendments, and then there's one day of hearings, which is irresponsible. One day of hearings on a budget implementation bill? And then there's going to be one day of clause-by-clause to move some funny amendments.

They're wreaking havoc on the economy of Ontario, not just in the health care sector but in almost every ministry. It's tragic, it's a disappointment, and certainly our opposition side under the leadership of Tim Hudak will be voting for the people of Ontario and against this bill.

1650

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I am pleased to speak to a time allocation motion that, really, the government shouldn't need to make. Our province needs the 2010-11 budget. We need those budget measures and we need them implemented now as Ontario emerges from this recession. Ontario has before it an ambitious budget to enable our 13 million people to flex their muscles, to use their business acumen and to create jobs and opportunities for all of us.

The pain of this recession is beginning to fade. People need Ontario partnering with our municipalities and our leading companies. Ontario needs our province's plan to invest \$32 billion in roads, bridges, public transit and energy. To do that, we need to pass this budget. We need an Ontario that's more open for business, but it seems that the Progressive Conservatives need more time to read their neo-conservative talking points. So we have a time allocation motion. We don't need a time allocation motion; we need to get on with the business of Ontario.

Ontario's employment levels are growing. People are coming back to work here in numbers greater than anywhere else in Canada. Tories need more time to read their talking points into the records. Conservatives want to tell Ontarians that their province is imploding around them; Ontarians know different. Ontarians want to trade with the rest of the world. We do that very well. Tories don't want Ontarians doing business with Asia, Europe and South America, so they'll denigrate the business acumen of the men and women who create opportunity here and tell them that if they can't beg for work in the United States, they have no right to expect it. That's nonsense, and Ontarians know it.

We speak every language on the planet in this province. We can do business everywhere on the globe. We know every culture in the world right here in Ontario, and we have experience doing every type of work, every type of business with every type of company. We need that 2010-11 budget getting Ontarians not only back to work, but out to our global markets. We need that budget putting the very money in the hands of families and small businesses that they need to create jobs in ones, twos and threes. Ontarians need that tax reduction. We need to have the confidence to invest in a sales trip, perhaps to sell what we do to another country or to another continent.

Ontario entrepreneurs need the implementation of a single sales tax to get \$4.5 billion in sales tax out of our economy each and every year so that businesses can make products and perform services here in Ontario, and be competitive with everywhere in the world. Ontario's Second Career program is not just a first in Canada. Second Career represents an opportunity for Ontario workers to make a career change and to keep the risk reasonable. Second Career means that if you believe in yourself and in your future and you need some help training, Ontario is going to assist you in upgrading your skills, and when you've earned the qualifications and acquired the skills that you need, you can have Ontario's budget measures working for you. You can find someone to employ you. You can find someone to finance your idea. You can find someone to believe in your company.

This budget does that. This budget offers that hope and that opportunity. This budget is that light at the end of the tunnel in the recession. This budget needs to get passed; this motion will make that happen.

But the neo-cons don't want that to happen. The neo-cons want to pit one group against another. Consider, for example, the conduct of the Ontario Conservatives toward the 1,251 men and women who work in the Ministry of Revenue and who will lose their jobs after Ontario repeals the outdated, expensive and cumbersome provincial sales tax. None of these men and women have ever worked with or have ever collected the newer, more efficient harmonized sales tax, which is, for all practical purposes, the goods and services tax that we've been working with for nearly 20 years. But the Ontario neo-cons refer to them with the sneering expression "HST tax collectors." Never mind that all of them, when they leave the Ontario public service, will lose all of their accumulated seniority; never mind that when these men and women transfer to the payroll of the Canada Revenue Agency, they're considered to be new hires and they're given just a two-year employment guarantee; never mind that these people have a legally negotiated and signed contract—signed, by the way, on the watch of a Conservative government in Ontario and renewed multiple times by a Conservative government. The neo-cons among the Ontario Conservatives believe that if you tell Ontarians these facts, perhaps if you label them "HST tax collectors," which they are not now and never will be, you can somehow render them less human, less worthy



of fair treatment and not worthy at all of honouring a fair and legally negotiated collective agreement.

Look out, teachers; look out, nurses, social workers, seniors and small business people and so many others. This is what they want you to vote for, and if you do, they'll stick it to you too. But not if you have this budget working for you. This is a budget that says to people in the financial sector—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The House will come to order. Thank you.

Continue.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This is a budget that says to people in Ontario's financial sector that they're part of Ontario's competitive edge too. The rest of the world knows that Ontario knows how to do financial services better than anywhere else in the world. Ontario-wide, some 625,000 people who provide or design or administer financial services for a living stand to benefit from these budget measures. But not if the neo-cons ever get their way—

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** You're a jackass.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Thornhill will withdraw that comment, please.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Continue, please.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** They'd kill those jobs in a heartbeat. Ontario's government would have a single national securities regulator located here in Ontario, except that the Tories don't want that to happen.

Opportunity flows from leadership and vision, and this budget has leadership and vision in abundance—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Respectfully, the standing order states that you can't impugn motive on a member without a substantive argument. I challenge what he's saying here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you for your input. I'll let the speaker continue.

Member from Mississauga—Streetsville, continue.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This budget has leadership and vision in abundance. The budget and the plan are going where Ontarians want to be. This budget takes Ontario forward into the first quarter of the 21st century. Of course, the Ontario Conservatives are now looking backward to the post-World War II era. The Ontario Conservatives have no focus and only a retrograde vision.

Ontario is reaching out to the rest of the world. We're reaching into China, whose population is 100 times ours. We're reaching into India, whose population is 85 times ours and is an English-speaking parliamentary democracy with the very capital that our province needs to partner with its entrepreneurial and creative culture. Ontario needs to reach out to Brazil, a nation with 15 times our population. This is a budget that reaches out to the world and says that an open Ontario is a place to do business, to create jobs and to build world-beating careers, products, services and companies.

To Conservatives, the future is all about going to the United States and saying, "Please, sir, we want more."

We want this time allocation motion to pass. We want this time allocation motion to pass so that Ontarians can go where they need to go, so that Ontarians can go forward into the future and take a vision that takes us where we need to be at the time the rest of the world will arrive where we're headed.

1700

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to rise to join with my colleagues on this side of the House to speak to this motion as presented by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I find it shocking that this government professes to have an Open Ontario, yet we're sitting here this afternoon debating a time allocation motion which is closing debate. I just find it amazingly funny that all I hear from that side—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** You can keep talking, but all I hear is you talking about Open Ontario—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The House will come to order. Thank you.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** —when we're talking here about closure.

The minister talks about speed, and I found that funny, having just gone through an election six weeks ago. Minister, the people of Ontario don't want speed; they want good decisions first. They're very, very concerned about where this government's going.

I listened attentively to the member for Mississauga—Streetsville, and I found it an incredible piece of fiction that he was spewing for the last few moments.

The minister talked about embracing local challenges. I want to take a moment to talk about some of the local challenges that I faced. People were genuine in their desire in Leeds—Grenville to have some relief provided by this government in the budget, and I must say they were extremely disappointed. That's the feedback that I have received to date.

Again, this government talks about Open Ontario, yet in my riding some of the main issues were things that the government was doing to close facilities and lose jobs.

I look at a place like the Brockville Mental Health Centre, a fine facility with many wonderful workers, that this government is closing. In addition, as I've spoken about a couple of times and directed questions to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care about, front-line health care and beds will be closed at the Brockville General Hospital in this government's hands.

Earlier today, I brought up a petition regarding 401 service centres that this government closed. I was so glad that we on this side of House were able to delay some of those closures. You drive by Mallorytown, in my riding, and you see the two service centres that this government closed, putting 250 people out of work in a very small, rural township. You drive by them, and the buildings are



still there. It's been seven months since they closed them, and neither of the buildings are down.

I'm so glad that that municipality passed a motion recently to give the government the authority to have 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week construction. I hope the government takes the challenge that the township of Front of Yonge has put forward to them to try to get these facilities built and try to get those people back working again.

As well, it's amazing, some of the decisions. During the election, we talked at great length about our licence bureaus, both in Brockville and in North Grenville located in Kemptville, two wonderful facilities that were run by the private sector. The government, again, closed these down. You know what? I remember talking to staff, and they even admitted that both of those facilities were extremely well-run, efficient facilities that provided a wonderful service to the ratepayers in Brockville and North Grenville, yet they closed them down in favour of another government option. Again, people are extremely concerned that those people were put out of work. So there was just a number of decisions that this government made to take jobs away from the riding.

The Brockville Mental Health Centre is an interesting case because there is a local plan that we've presented to both the federal and provincial governments to build upon the wonderful facility. We have a secure treatment facility for male patients, and we're looking for the government's commitment to a service that would serve female secure-treatment inmates, one that the government, the Minister of Corrections, acknowledges would fill a need in this province. Yet again, the federal government is waiting for the province to come to the table to add jobs to that site, and those jobs are not forthcoming by this government. They're not moving. So we look at that portion just in the riding.

Listen, I knocked on a lot of doors six weeks ago during the election. It was a very lively election. We had four wonderful local candidates who worked extremely hard and talked about those local issues. I found it very refreshing to enter my first foray into provincial politics in a by-election because it gave us an opportunity to talk about local issues.

After my election—my swearing-in didn't take place until the 22nd—I was up in the gallery here for the throne speech. I must admit that when I looked at the government backbenchers, I didn't see that they showed much enthusiasm for the throne speech. They looked a little unsettled by the message that was there.

As well, when I was involved in my first budget lock-up, I was really a keener, and I walked over with my seatmate, the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, and I couldn't believe that we were stopped from coming into this House. I know that that matter has been addressed, but again, I'm just a little unsettled that we were held back from coming into this place.

I look at some of the schedules, and one that really troubles me is schedule 17, the Local Health System Integration Act. I know that the unaccountable, unelected

local health integration networks, or LHINs, were an issue that certainly came up in my election campaign, one that people were extremely concerned about. Certainly, you have to question this government for enacting that schedule to delay the review of those agencies until 2012. You just to have question why the government would do that, given what has happened in the province under eHealth.

I hear a lot from my constituents regarding the fact that Ontario, which was once the engine of this country, is now a have-not province. Last year in 2009-10, we received our first equalization payment of \$347 million. In just one year, that payment will have tripled to \$972 million. It's just tragic how we've fallen behind.

I know the people in my riding want a break. I know that during my election campaign, the HST was a tremendous issue.

I want to close by talking not just about the PC vote during that election, but that of the NDP and the Green Party. This government should stand up and take notice that 80%—80%—of the people who voted in our by-election voted against this government and voted against the HST.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It's a pleasure again to rise and talk about this budget. It seems that I've talked a lot about this budget in recent days.

Here we are, talking about a closure motion. In the eight-plus years that I've been here, I've spoken to many closure motions. Particularly when the previous government was here, the Conservatives, it seemed like almost everything was subject to closure.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** No, no. I'm saying the NDP had the record—that is not at all the case.

I know the first two years I was here, almost every bill was subject to closure. What I particularly remember is the Liberals in opposition speaking against those closure motions with such extreme passion, with such verve in their voice, talking about how the closure was an affront to democracy, an affront to this House, and how the people needed to be heard. It's sad when I hear members in this government now saying completely the opposite, speaking of the necessity of having a closure motion on something as important as a budget. If there is one single thing a government does every year, one single piece of legislation they bring forward, one debate that we have, surely the strongest and fullest debate has to be the debate about the budget and where the money is spent.

After all, we are taking \$100 billion of taxpayers' money and spending it in a way that we hope the taxpayers appreciate. The taxpayers need to be consulted, and they need to be talked to, and they need to have an opportunity to understand how that money is being spent.

So when a government stands up and says we're going to invoke closure on the most important debate we're going to have in the entire year and gives no rational reason for it—there is nothing on the government agenda



that is pressing. There is nothing on the government agenda that is going to take up the time of this House between now and June 3, when we are probably going to adjourn for the summer, and there is certainly ample opportunity to allow extra time to speak to this budget measure.

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They invoke closure, and what that does, in effect, is it gives two hours for all of the parties, 40 minutes each, to stand here and talk about the budget again. But the government is not talking about the closure. They're not talking about why they feel that this is an important measure. Does the budget have to be passed within 48 hours? Is there some real need that it pass within 48 hours, that you're doing this? I don't understand. You've not explained, and you probably will not explain, why you have done this, except that you're tired, I think, of hearing people critical of what you once thought was a good document and what you're now understanding is a document that is full of holes. Because there's really not a whole lot in this budget.

When I spoke the other day, when I had my 20 minutes, I talked about two things that were particularly troubling to me in the budget. The first had to do with what was happening in the hospitals and the fact that in this budget, the government, in its wisdom, confined the hospitals to a 1.5% increase. The hospital administrators across this entire province will tell you that the costs for Ontario hospitals this year are probably in the 4% to 5% range, so that in order for them to maintain the services that we have today, they will require 4% or 5% because they have wage inflation, they have ordinary inflation, they have wage drift, they have new technologies, they have new government programs—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Maintenance.

**Mr. Michael Prue:**—maintenance of older buildings. They have all of that with which they must contend, and they need 4% to 5% in order to maintain that service; they've been told they are going to have 1.5%. The administrators across the province have told this government—certainly, the administrator in my local hospital, Toronto East General, Rob Devitt, whose name gets mentioned a lot in this House, told me too that he cannot do what he did before on the budget he's going to be receiving.

So they've made some very real decisions, and I talked about this before. They have made the decision to cut out the physiotherapy unit, they have made the decision to give 118 nurses their layoff notice and they have made the decision, sadly—and I asked a question in the House about this today—to tell all of those groups, like the diabetes association and the Arthritis Society, that they can no longer use the facilities of the hospital for local outreach and meetings without paying \$480 to use them. This is a very sad thing. The hospital administrator doesn't want to do it, the community doesn't want to have it happen, and yet what other choice do they have? I spoke about that; I don't want to dwell too much more on that.

I also spoke about poverty the last time. I spoke about the government and this Premier, who in the 2007 election said he was going to be the poverty Premier in the same way—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Champion.

**Mr. Michael Prue:**—poverty champion in the same way that he said in the 2003 election that he was going to be the education Premier. He promised that we were going to see a revolution in how we deal with poor people, much as he had promised that we were going to have a revolution in how we dealt with students and the educational system.

If there was one thing that disappointed me—really disappointed me, a boy from Regent Park, the NDP's poverty critic—it was how this government dealt with that issue. Gone were the lofty goals of 2007. Gone were even the things they said in last year's throne speech. It is gone. The whole commitment to poverty is not there anymore, and one only has to look at this budget and only has to look at one of most mean-spirited things I have ever seen, the elimination of the special diet allowance.

The fear that is out there is palpable. If you go into the poorer communities, if you go to see people who are on ODSP, those who have physical and mental ailments, those who are unable to work—the government acknowledges they can't work—you'll see the fear that they have of having literally up to 25% of their entire budget cut from under their feet with no real opportunity to explain it and no real opportunity, probably, with the incoming legislation, to qualify, because the government has set out in its throne speech and again in its budget that the new program will only be for those who have the most severe cases. They have not defined "severe," but I will tell you that I doubt very much that the majority of people who are getting the special diet allowance today will get it come four or five months from now.

I did talk about what was said before the Human Rights Commission, what the government has laid out in its very affidavit. I said all that the last time. It's clear the government knows exactly what they're doing and how they're trying to undercut those who are amongst our poorest citizens.

But today I want to talk more about the jobs—I didn't have an opportunity to talk about that the last time—and why I think that this budget is absolutely deficient in creating jobs. I listen every day in this House; some government minister, the Premier, somebody, some backbencher in a speech will stand up and talk about the 600,000 jobs that are going to be created because of the HST. This is one of the most ridiculous statements I have ever heard. It doesn't have one iota of scientific or historical fact.

I will ask the members opposite, just simply look at the Maritimes. When the Maritimes brought in their own version of the HST, jobs actually declined. They declined. I don't know how many times I have to say this. Go and look it up. Don't listen to the spin doctors. They actually declined, and they did not increase in any real way for eight or 10 years after that. This is not some



magic bullet. It is not a magic bullet, and it is not going to create the jobs that you say it will.

But what happened in the Maritimes is surely worthy of study because they instituted their version of the HST, which, by the way, was less than the combined totals of the GST and PST; they actually reduced it 2%, 3% or 4%, depending on the province. They did that, and even then it didn't work. What did happen was a birth of the underground economy; that was amazing beyond belief—absolutely amazing.

Home contractors, if you wanted a roof repaired, would come—we've all had this experience here in Ontario—and say, "It's going to cost \$2,000 to repair your roof. However, if you want to give me cash, I can do it for \$1,500." This is what, in fact, happened in the Maritimes, to the point that legitimate contractors, companies that tried to play the real game, to pay real wages, to pay real taxes, to give real benefits, to have real things for people like proper workers' compensation, started to slowly go out of business. They continued to go out of business to the point that even today in the Maritimes, even after all these years, there are still not as many people operating contracting services above board as there were when the HST came into those provinces. I don't know whether the government knows about that or cares about that, but that is the reality of what is going to happen here. We have been warned by the construction industry to expect that.

We have also been warned by other groups. I got a very good video—I think most of the members here got it; I don't know how many people watched it—from Molly Maid. I was not aware of what happened to Molly Maid. They had huge operations, particularly in Quebec, and said they had some in the Maritimes. When the HST was brought into those provinces, they found that their work went almost to nothing. In Ontario, where did it not happen, where they were only subject to the GST, they found that the number of people who hired their services declined by about one third, so they're only today two thirds as big as they once were. But in Quebec, they were completely obliterated, and in the Maritimes, they were completely obliterated because of the same factor: under the table.

If you're going to hire someone to clean your house, you go out and find someone who will do it for less, someone who will not have the protection of a union, someone who will not have the protection of workers' compensation if something happens to them. You will hire somebody who will do it without paying any taxes back to government. That's the reality of what happened, and they showed the direct correlation. They said quite bluntly and carefully and without being dramatic that when the HST comes to Ontario, they are almost assured to go out of business.

Does the government ever talk about this? Does the government ever say anything about this? No. They talk about these magical 600,000 jobs which are ethereal. They pull the number out of air because some economist who they paid big bucks to give them that information

said it was going to happen. Well, it is not going to happen.

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The reality is as well that this magic bullet, this HST, is going to cost this government some \$4.5 billion. I've said it over and over again, and I was pleased that my friend from Mississauga talked about that today: It's going to take \$4.5 billion out of government coffers. It's not something that we hear is a tax grab. Quite the contrary; it's the opposite. It's going to cost this government \$4.5 billion in revenues that they desperately need and are not going to have.

At the same time, this government talks in its budget about the trickle-down effect, how manufacturers are going to take this \$4.5 billion, this largesse that they're going to get from government, and pass it on in the form of savings to ordinary people. It is not going to happen. It is simply not going to happen. It hasn't happened anywhere else in the world and it's not going to happen here in Ontario.

The reality is that companies that need the money will take that for their bottom line. It will help some of them to survive, which is a good thing, but it will also pad the profits of those successful companies so that they can actually make more. They're not going to pass it down if they don't have to. The only time they will ever pass down savings is if there is real competition, and all too often, because of this economy, many of the competitors are no longer there.

The reality is that the HST is going to do an awful lot of hurtful things that nobody on the other side seems to want to talk about. When you go out and get a lawyer, you're going to have to pay HST. So if you find yourself in trouble with the law or you're buying a house, if you find that you're in need of a lawyer, you're now going to have to pay HST, which you didn't have to pay for before. If you buy a house and you need a real estate agent, a surveyor or any of the people who might be involved in that—a land processor—then you're going to find out you have to pay HST there. You're going to have to pay HST on the gas, on your oil, on your energy, and on your electricity.

A new one came to me just today. I hadn't really thought about this. All of the businesses that try to reach out to their consumers in the form of advertising have been HST-exempt, but they're not going to be HST-exempt on July 1. I hadn't really thought about this, except that as a member of this Legislature, and I'm sure all members of the Legislature do similarly—in the local newspaper that comes out every two weeks in the Beach, Beach Metro News, we have a little tiny card ad. It's about this big, and we pay—I don't know what we pay for it; \$100 or something we pay for this ad. They billed us every year for 12 or 24 issues. We paid the money. It was an ad defining where our office was, what the hours were, and that walk-ins were welcome on constituency days. A lot of people would read that ad, come up and seek help from us. It was, I think, money well spent.

When we went to pay, they wouldn't take the money from us for this year. They took the first half of the year



and they said that they would bill us for the portion from July 1 to the end of the year. I was wondering why they did that. They told me that's because we have to pay 8% extra for the ad. I'm not crying foul; my constituency budget, I guess, can afford the 8%, but I'm thinking about all those small businesses out there that advertise. They're going to have to pay 8% more to advertise, come July 1, than they did before.

It's no wonder that small business people across this province are opposed to the HST. They are absolutely opposed. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business came to see me this morning about some of their proposals, and they say that their members are 85% opposed to the HST.

Is there any wonder that this government never talks about that? You talk about the chambers of commerce, the great big giant organizations, the banks and others, who all think you're wonderful, but I'll tell you, the backbone of our economy, those small business people, are opposed because they know that costs will be inordinate.

I want to talk, too, about some of the energy increases because I've been listening in the last few days while this government twists in the wind as they're asked questions by the opposition. They're asked questions about the increases in everything from the Green Energy Act and how that's going to increase, to the Ontario Energy Board and how that's going to increase, and the HST and how that's going to increase the costs. I'll tell you, there are people out there who are very nervous about this. Notwithstanding what the Minister of Revenue stands up and says about cutting taxes for some Ontarians, people are very nervous about what this is going to cost them in the long run. People are very nervous, particularly the elderly, particularly those who are on fixed incomes, particularly those who have minimum-wage jobs, about their ability to hold on to their homes and their property and to make ends meet, because they realize that an 8% increase is particularly onerous.

I laughed, too, when I saw the government's response to people who own properties and who rent them out. I'm not generally sympathetic to landlords, but I have to tell you, I found it kind of bizarre that the government—this much-vaunted HST that they say isn't going to hurt anyone, when it was pointed out how it's going to harm tenants, and I believe it will, took a long time—five months later it quietly said, “No, the landlords aren't going to be able to pass this money on.” But what do landlords do when they can't pass the money on? And I'm not, as I said many times, a great fan of them, but we'll see the same downward spiral that we've seen before. We'll see painting on walls that won't get done. We'll see repairs that are put off. We'll see buildings start to deteriorate and people living in fouler and fouler conditions. What is the government doing about all this? Next to nothing.

I just want to close with a couple of other things. We need to start thinking smarter. This government needs to start thinking smarter when they put forward an eco-

nomie blueprint like the budget. You cannot cut off debate without hearing what you should have done. We need to target jobs. We need to target those industries and bring in new industries that are going to create work. We don't need to be giving money away to multinational corporations that hide the money away or send it offshore. That's what's happening here, that's what this government doesn't want to hear and that's why this government is inducing closure here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I'm delighted to be able to speak on this time allocation motion. Yesterday, we concluded the debate after seven hours and 41 minutes; the regulation states six and a half hours. So we did seven hours and 41 minutes to give a chance to the opposition to really tell the truth to the people of Ontario, and this is why we're having a debate. A debate is meant to properly inform the people of Ontario, and this is not exactly what we're doing. People right now—when I meet people at restaurants—are confused. They are stressed and really nervous after hearing them, and people keep telling me: “Jean-Marc, why don't you correct that in the paper?”

We have a bill in place, but we are not allowed to do any promotion of a bill until it has passed third reading and royal assent. This is why we could not tell the people. But let me tell you, I've had 18 info sessions in the last two weeks on the HST. It's unbelievable. In the places I go to, I get standing ovations, people are lining up to give me their hand because—they say, “Finally, we are getting the truth.”

The reason we had to come out with the HST is because we have to look after the economy of this beautiful province. In the province of Ontario, we have faced an economic crisis like the rest of the world. The recession has hit the world, not only Ontario, and they all know that on the other side. They should tell the people. Very often, I hear from the other side: “Oh, the government is not spending enough money on some of those programs,” and they turn around the same day and say, “Hey, you keep spending money.” We are creating jobs, and we said that, with the HST, we will create 600,000 jobs and also attract \$47 billion of investment.

I have to tell you what happened in my info sessions. First of all, I got a big poster: a family of four that makes \$40,000 a year—a single worker: \$40,000 a year. It represents \$20 an hour at 40 hours a week. This person, at the end of the first year, is ahead by \$1,298—\$1,298 more in his pocket. I did count the extra electricity. What they say on the other side is that it's going to cost an average of \$350 more a year. Do you know how much electricity you have to use to spend \$350 more a year on your electricity? You have to use an average of 3,000 kilowatt hours a month. At the present time, the average in Ontario is 800 kilowatt hours a month; I'm using 1,000. So the electricity, 1,000 kilowatts; the gasoline, 150 litres a month; and the heating, 300 cubic metres a month—it comes down to an extra cost, because of the 8%, of \$351. The \$1,649 more that he's making, it's



\$1,000 the first year, and then a family of four that makes \$40,000 a year will get \$440—it's \$110 per head—and then the average income tax deduction that he's going to have is \$209. That makes \$1,649.

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Also, there were business people, there were farmers in there, there were seniors, there were young families—unbelievable, what they heard from the other side. It's too bad that the media tend to report the criticism in the paper or on the radio. When you get the truth, it's completely different. Remember, on March 4, we had a by-election in Ottawa. One candidate, a Tory candidate, kept saying that from now on—like I hear from the other side—everybody is going to pay 13% more in their purchasing. It's not true at all; on 83% of whatever you buy today, you already pay the 8%.

I walked into a restaurant, and a gentleman was really mad. He said, "Now I'll be paying, for my wife and I, every morning when I come for breakfast, 13% more." I went and sat down with him. I said, "Jerry, give me your invoice that you paid for your breakfast." I looked at it: 5% and 8%. I said, "Jerry, five plus eight makes 13." "Well," he said, "You're going to add another 13% on top of that." He got that from the other side. We have to tell the truth to the people so the people will live properly and not go to bed with—des inquiétudes we say in French; they are worried.

We have a plan for the future. When we say that we have a plan, we didn't forget about health care, because this year alone we added \$2.3 billion to health care. We have a budget now of \$45.3 billion for health care. When they're saying that we are cutting health care, it's not true at all; we increased it by \$2.3 billion this year.

When I look at the agricultural sector and rural affairs, we have increased the budget by 53% since we came to power. So I think the people have to be informed properly. This is why we're having a debate, and this is why today we're saying that we have to come up with a time allocation motion: so we can pass the bill and go ahead with other bills that we are debating.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** My colleague there wrapped up a little sooner than I was expecting. He almost caught me flat-footed there. He did a great job, and I'm happy to follow in his footsteps. I have about 10 minutes to make some remarks today on what is before us, and I'm very happy to have the opportunity to do so.

What I wanted to begin talking a little bit about, as he did as well, was the HST, the implementation of which hits us on July 1 of this year; I believe that's the date it takes effect. I've had an opportunity, as we discussed the budget, to listen to the opposition members spend a fair bit of their time, when they're discussing the budget and related details, on the HST, even though of course the legislation bringing this into force happened quite some time ago, as did the federal legislation that enables us to go forward with the HST get passed quite some time ago as well—that, of course, being brought forward by the

federal Conservative government, and now provincial legislation. So they have spent a fair bit of time on the HST. I will address some of my opening remarks in that regard and then some more specific budget pieces later on.

I must say, I've been a little bit envious of the opposition when it comes to their opportunities associated with the HST. You can almost see them smiling and having a great deal of fun with it. I think it's even fair to say that the HST has put a bit of wind in their sails. They're spending a great deal of time talking about it. What they're not, however, spending a great deal of time talking about when it comes to the HST is the other half of the story. I do think that at some point—and I think it's already beginning—the other shoe will drop, and their constituents, the people they've been talking to about the HST, are going to begin to ask them why they haven't been told the other half of the story. I truly believe that has begun to happen, and I truly believe that it will happen in a much greater fashion as we get closer to the implementation date.

I know that on our side of the House, we're spending more time talking about it. The message is clearly beginning to get out to people that when it comes to matters of the HST, there is another, significant part of the story that needs to be told.

I would say, by way of example, that as the HST implementation date gets closer, one of the things we're not seeing is a hue and cry from any large organized groups in the province of Ontario. The front lawn of Queen's Park is not constantly occupied by people who are opposing, in any great numbers, the pending implementation date of the HST on July 1. They are not here. Poverty groups, low-income earners, middle-income earners, who you would think, if you listened to the opposition members, are the ones who are going to be most adversely affected by the implementation of the HST, are not on the front lawns of Queen's Park protesting it. In fact, they're supporting it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I know my friend from Beaches—East York knows this as well. Many significantly organized large poverty groups in the province of Ontario have very publicly articulated their support for the HST because they've heard the other half of the story.

I think there is some blame to be laid on us, perhaps, as individual members for not having done a good enough job up to this point of articulating the benefits of the HST to those in Ontario. But as I've said, that's going to begin to happen in short order.

I did my 20 minutes the other day and had an opportunity to use this example. I think it merits a repeat here today, and I'll use it before I go on to the particular budget highlights. A 1% reduction on the first \$37,000 of your payable income tax in the province of Ontario: Everybody who earns \$37,000 is eligible for that 1% reduction. That 1%, of course, gives you \$370 more. You bring that into income, and by the time they're taxed on that, some people, depending on their rate of taxation, are going to end up with \$250 or \$300 more in their pocket.



Then we take the northern Ontario energy tax credit. I'm very proud of that. The northern caucus worked hard on that, and we brought it in: up to \$130 for singles and up to \$200 for families, in addition to the 1% personal income tax reduction.

Those are only two of the tax pieces that we've brought in that will help people, but I'll use those two only to illustrate my example. If you are eligible for the full \$200 tax credit—I'll use that because the math is easier—and if you got \$300 on the 1% reduction on the first \$37,000, those two pieces alone—and as I've said, they're not the total tax package of reform that will help people—would give people \$500 more in their pocket at the end of the day.

One hundred dollars of tax relief requires the people who are going to be affected by the HST to spend approximately \$1,250 on previously PST-exempt items—\$100. So that \$500 number that I've just quoted—do the math—times \$1,200 is over \$6,000 that you will be required to spend on previously PST-exempt items. So once the single sales tax comes into effect on July 1, remembering, of course, that some of these tax reductions—and I have to remind the constituents in Thunder Bay–Atikokan and everybody in Ontario, file your taxes so you get these credits, because they came into effect, fully six months before the harmonized sales tax starts. Those people will now have to spend over \$6,000 on previously PST-exempt items.

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I began my speech by saying why the front lawn of Queen's Park is not occupied by people who are concerned with the imposition of the HST beginning July 1, and that's why: because they know the other half of the story. As I said at the beginning, the opposition members are having great fun with this. I find interesting, I must say, the position that the Conservatives have taken on this. They've—how would I phrase it?—perhaps planted their ideological flag on this issue and will carry it forward as something they hope will be a ballot question in 2011. I think it's going to be extremely interesting to watch how that plays for them politically, because historically, certainly on this side of House—and the chambers of commerce, Len Crispino and small business owners know that this is a great thing for us to do. I find it a bit passing strange, I must say, that provincially the Conservatives, who we all know in their heart of hearts support this initiative, have decided to take the position that they have. I think they're going to find very soon that this is going to boomerang on them, and they're going to have a very difficult time defending this as we go forward in 2011, especially given the relief that we received from their federal cousins, the federal Conservatives, who are very much in favour of it. I find that very interesting.

So I'm going to repeat for the final time: That's only two of the tax relief measures, \$500. You need to spend over \$6,000 on previously PST-exempt items before you will use up just those two credits. So that's part of the other half of the story.

Contained within the budget were significant pieces, which I'm very proud of, for northern Ontario only. The first, of course, others have spoken to: the energy assistance available to our large industrials. This is very significant: a \$150-million-per-year, three-year program, which will be there for the next three years, which will provide energy reduction up to 25% for our large industrials in northern Ontario. That's very significant. I know that in my community in Thunder Bay, where Abitibi-Bowater is currently in CCAA in the United States, we're hoping they're going to come out of this in a very positive way. We're hoping they're going to maintain their operations in Thunder Bay and provide further employment. I know that large corporations like that—which, we must remind our NDP friends, do provide employment. We don't all love those corporations. We all have our challenges with them. But we have to remember that they do provide employment. AbitibiBowater is a large employer in my particular riding, and I would suspect that, while they're in CCAA in the United States, they are watching the tax structure in Ontario very carefully.

The second item, I've already mentioned, is the northern Ontario tax credit. Our northern caucus is very proud of that piece: up to \$130 for singles and up to \$200 for families; income-tested. The \$130 one kicks in around \$35,000 and phases out at \$48,000, give or take. The \$200 for families phases out around \$65,000. That's a very significant piece.

The third and final one that I'll mention as well, which bears repeating, is the northern Ontario heritage fund. It was \$60 million when we came to government. We've committed to increasing it up to \$100 million. It went up to \$70 million in 2008, up to \$80 million in 2009 and up to \$90 million in the 2010 budget; \$30 million more than we were spending in 2007, \$60 million more cumulatively, plus the \$60 million a year. That's a very significant commitment. It would have been easy, I must say, given the economic times that we find ourselves in, for us to not maintain that commitment, remembering of course that the NDP, when they were in a recession in the early 1990s, took the entire \$60 million out of the northern Ontario heritage fund. We've taken a different approach. This is creating significant private sector employment in northern Ontario.

I can remember that one of the first jobs I had as the PA to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines in 2004 was to tour the province and reconnect this program back to its original mandate when it was brought in by David Peterson in the late 1980s, which was private sector job creation. We've done that. We have made several announcements with significant success in creating private sector jobs. We're very proud of the northern Ontario heritage fund, and we're very proud of the commitment that we've kept, ramping it up to \$90 million.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to stand in this House today and make a few comments about the



time allocation motion that has been introduced by the Liberal government.

Regrettably, the debate on the budget is coming to an end, and we have now a very draconian time allocation motion in front of us which is going to mean that the 100-plus pages in the budget are going to only allow for one day of hearings. The public is only going to have the opportunity to come in on one day.

As you know, this was a very contentious budget; it was a very unusual budget. We had a deficit and a debt higher than any that we had ever seen before. Certainly, if you go through the budget item by item, you will see that there are many issues, whether it's the HST, pharmacy changes, postponement of the LHIN review—and the list goes on and on—issues that I know the public would like to make some comment about, as well as the debt and the deficit, and they're only going to have one day of hearings.

It's quite obvious that the government is not interested in hearing input from the public regarding this budget. They probably recognize better than anyone else that this budget is somewhat of an embarrassment in that it shows that the government still has a major, major spending problem, which has led us to a staggering provincial debt. In fact, every year that Dalton McGuinty has been in office, he has added to the debt, and he's been digging the hole deeper and deeper for everyone. Unfortunately, it's going to be our children and our grandchildren who are going to have to deal with the consequences of the debt, as each year we have to pay more and more in the way of servicing costs. And if the interest rate goes up, as they indicate that it will, it will only increase the problem for ourselves, for our children and for our grandchildren.

We have a deficit now that stands at \$21.3 billion. This is, as we know, the largest deficit ever in the province of Ontario. There is no plan whatsoever to deal with the deficit. We've simply been alerted to the fact that it will probably be at least eight years before they can balance the budget, and there are some economists that will tell you that before eight years are out, maybe we're going to have another recession, so this deficit might never see a balanced budget.

They are now still borrowing at least \$2 million an hour more than they're taking in, every hour of every day. This government talks a good talk about, "Yes, we've got to cut back; we've got to restrain," but government funding of lots of expenditures continues to go up.

The one thing I would say to you, Madam Chair, is that the ability of the taxpayers to pay for all of this drunken-sailor spending is decreasing because the electorate in the province of Ontario has now been alerted to the fact that probably, in the next year, they're going to have to pay, on average, an additional \$350 for their electricity. Again, that's going to be a hardship for many people—and that's a minimum. They also know that the HST is going to be introduced on July 1, and it's going to have a wide-ranging impact on many of the purchases that individuals make, whether it's haircuts, whether it's

heating, whether it's that membership at the gym, whether it's registering your children for gymnastics, hockey or skating—again, there are going to be extra costs incurred by people—or whether it's paying for your funeral.

It's estimated that the average family of four is going to have to pay, each year, about \$2,500 extra. So there's almost an additional \$3,000 that the public is going to have to pay that this government has introduced. You tack that on to the HST, to the health tax that the government introduced right after they were elected in 2003—we know some people are paying up to \$1,000 there, in health taxes—and you can see on a daily, monthly, yearly basis that people in this province, as a result of the spending, the outrageous, drunken-sailor type of spending by this government, have less and less in way of discretionary money to spend on the necessities.

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So not only do we have this huge deficit of \$21.3 billion, we also have a debt that is set to double by 2013. These are the Liberal projections. The debt has actually doubled under Mr. McGuinty's term in comparison to the debt that was accumulated over all the years by all the other Premiers.

This government, then, has also now decided, "Why cut back on spending this year? We want to win the next election, so let's try to pay our way and let's try to bribe the voters," so people are going to get some money back this July as a result of the HST. Again, they're putting off the tough decisions, even though they know they've got a problem. They're going to supposedly, they tell us, make the tough decisions after October 2011.

What I found pretty disappointing in this budget is the fact that there is no jobs plan. In my community, we have seen the loss of a lot of jobs; we have throughout the province of Ontario. In fact, this province has done more poorly basically than any other province in Canada. In fact, we've also now become a have-not province, which is pretty embarrassing. We, who used to be the economic engine in Canada, have now become a have-not welfare province, thanks to the policy of the McGuinty government.

They still haven't recognized that if we're going to see job growth, if we're going to see people paying taxes that are going to support the spending that's necessary for health, education etc., you've got to create an economic environment that would encourage the private sector to create new jobs, expand their businesses and encourage people to move into the province. Instead, when we've talked about job growth in this province, the job growth primarily has been in the public sector.

Today, we stand here—we have no further opportunity to debate the budget. The public has only one day to come forward and make representation. There are going to be hundreds and hundreds of individuals and groups who are going to be disappointed because there will not be an opportunity. The government doesn't want to hear them. We're going to have one day of clause-by-clause and then the bill will come back here for one day.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** One hour.



**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** One hour, and we're done—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

Mr. Milloy has moved government notice of motion number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

There will be a 10-minute bell. Call in the members.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I've just received a deferral slip from the chief opposition whip to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads: "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the time allocation motion listed on today's

order paper as government notice of motion number 4 be deferred."

Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry? It's deferred.

*Vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

I therefore declare that the House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

*The House adjourned at 1753.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington-Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering-Scarborough East / Pickering-Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Simcoe-Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough-Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough-Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
		Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham-Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga-Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale-High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward-Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor-Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby—Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) <b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Oakville Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham—Kent—Essex Niagara West—Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest—Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) <b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges—Markham Brampton—Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock Dufferin—Caledon Newmarket—Aurora Welland Bramalea—Gore—Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry—Prescott—Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean—Carleton Mississauga—Brampton South / Mississauga—Brampton-Sud Trinity—Spadina Cambridge	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) <b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough— Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa—Orléans Ottawa—Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound—Muskoka Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London—Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth—Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe—Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

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Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
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spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

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Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial







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